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- 1: **INDEPENDENT PAPERS** do not belong to a pre-arranged session, it is up to the program committee to assign the paper to a already defined or not yet defined session and theme.
- 2: **PAPERS for OPEN SESSIONS** can be assigned to pre-arranged and approved sessions. Mostly some contributions are already defined but you are free to apply your paper to an already existing session. The chair of the session will review your paper.
- 3: **CLOSED SESSIONS** are completely pre-arranged. Only already defined contributors can apply to this session. The chair of the session will review the applied papers.

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Individual Paper for INDEPENDENT Sessions

Submit your individual paper and assign it to an INDEPENDENT (=not pre-arranged) session.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: info@easr2018.org

OPEN SESSION (W. ALBERTS, T. JENSEN, M. GIORDA): Multiple religious and secular identities in the public school

This panel, organised by the EASR Working Group on Religion in Public Education, focuses on the representation of multiple religious and secular identities in two areas of the public school: (1) school handling of religious and secular belonging and (2) the representation of religions in various kinds of religious education, including the legal framework, curricula and textbooks.

The panel invites papers focusing on what the conference organisers call "the uncomfortable choice" and the "constructive tension" between homogenizing constructs of religions and worldviews and individual religious or secular identities. What kind of consequences does the criticism of concepts such as "world religions" or "syncretism" have in relation to the handling and representation of religions and worldviews in school? In what way are theoretical discussions and insights in the academic Study of Religions relevant for school contexts?

In recent debates within the academic discipline of the Study of Religions about this "constructive tension", the view that sophisticated theoretical and methodological reflection about the concept of religion and the way in which knowledge is produced has its place mainly (and exclusively?) in theory-related courses in the Study of Religions at universities, while in other contexts the communication of "knowledge about world religions" in the traditional sense is what scholars of religion should offer, has often been articulated. Challenging that view, this panel intends to discuss the consequences of these kinds of theoretical and methodological challenges for the communication of study-of-religions based knowledge to school contexts.

Focusing particularly (1) on the way that religious and secular belonging among pupils and teachers is being dealt with at different levels of school organisation and practice and (2) on what kind of knowledge about religions and non-religious worldviews is communicated in and beyond classrooms in school, we invite papers that relate recent theoretical and methodological discussions in the Study of Religions to both the analysis of these issues and the potential contribution of the academic discipline, be it in teacher training or other contexts.

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OPEN SESSION (M. ARNHOLD): Death as a Process: Debating the Polyvalence of Chthonic Cults in Graeco-Roman Antiquity

This panel explores the power and polyvalence of chthonic cults in Graeco-Roman antiquity. From a methodological point of view, it takes its cue from recent publications (Ustinova 2009; Edmonds 2011; Bremmer 2014; von Ehrenheim 2015; Burton 2017, etc.), current scholarly discoveries (among others, those related to the so-called Orphic Dionysiac Lamellae: Herrero de Jáuregui 2015; Malama and Tzifopoulos 2016), as well as debates on the significance and durability of worshipping deities related to earth, death and agriculture. The contributors of this panel engage closely with both texts and material artefacts that shed further light on the complex processes of signification of death not as a final event, but as a traumatic and yet natural process, for which mortals (both members of the elite and commoners) can prepare and, thus, partly embrace.

Perceiving death as a rite de passage goes well beyond perceiving the dead human body as an object; it draws attention to its agency and multivalence as they manifest in the related burial practices and ritual actions. These practices and rites include forms of proper burials including the laying out of the corpse, its transport to the tomb, and subsequent burial (cremation/inhumation), as well as the denial of these particular rites. The transformative journey of the deceased and their body, however, do not cease upon entombment or cremation. Instead, the rites performed for the deceased—either in his/her honor or as appeasement—are indicative of the deceased's status change and transformation. These rites along attest to the complexity of the deceased's identity and the agents involved in the process of its transformation.

The contributions are dedicated to various aspects of this topic: Marlis Arnhold draws attention onto the polyvalence of deposition modes and burial practices in late Classical and early Hellenistic Northern Greece. Arguing that particularly the practice of cremation was acquired to distinguish and elevate a deceased from others, she introduces a new conception of the category of 'special dead'. Georgia Petridou explores the close correlations of healing cults in the second century CE with katabatic rites that were traditionally associated with chthonic cults.

The panel invites further contributions to the topic. These may look, for instance, into disarticulated bones and human remains found in tombs or other burial contexts. Findings, such as these, attest to processes that take place after the original burial (such as the reopening of a tomb for further burial), but could also tell a very different story, one of violent plundering of precious objects or carrying off body parts to gain relics. It is in this particular case of the bodily parts turned into saintly relics that we can clearly discern the increased agency of the objectified corpse and the potential for the ascription of new meanings to the dead body as a whole or assemblage of fragmented parts.

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OPEN SESSION (I. BANCILA): Esotericism and Eastern Christianities II: Language Games

The academic Study of Religion is only rarely concerned with Eastern Christianities (here limited to the "national" Christianities of Eastern Europe, Greece and Russia, as well as their dissemination worldwide), thus failing to take into account a fascinating field of study, the multileveled religious dynamics of which still await their proper contextualization. This is also the case with approaches to (Western) Esotericism, where still less attention is given to encroachments, cross-fertilizations and encounters with Eastern Christianities.

Responsible for the interest of various (Western) Esotericisms on Eastern Christianities is first of all the construction and promotion of Eastern Christian Orthodoxy as a "mystical tradition" in itself, (beginning with the Byzantine theology following the "great Schism" in the 11th century) and subsequently as an identity marker in large or small scale inter-confessional polemics. This triggered a double-tiered attitude towards Eastern Christianities in the West, also colored by but not limited to some confessional vantage points: on the one side a profound aversion, particularly due to the keenness of Eastern Christianities to incorporate in their rituals various aspects of local popular religious practices, on the other - a vexed interest in what was perceived as potentially a gateway into the idealized original Christianity, at least in the nascent years of the Protestant Reform. The rest was cobbled from imagination: thus, rumors of superhuman powers and healing abilities being cultivated in remote Eastern Christian monastic settlements (such as Mount Athos in Greece or Optina Monastery in Russia) fed Western (esoteric) perceptions of Eastern Christianity, adding to its allegedly "mystical" aura or "oriental" (thus ancient) genuineness. The strong notion of "Tradition" in Eastern Christian theology and practice, as well as the extreme ascetical practices of its hermits further enhanced the idea of an unbroken chain of spiritual authority and hidden knowledge and not the least, of secret (monastic) brotherhoods cherishing it. Not unexpectedly, various Western initiatives of rediscovering the Patristic literature were part of the same Esoteric mindset.

Also of particular interest in this context are the strategies of legitimacy employed by emerging or already established Esotericisms in referring to or integrating topics of doctrine, practice, or worldview perceived as particular to various Eastern Christianities. Pertaining to the global dissemination of Esotericism, these strategies would be expected in but are not limited to (emerging) local Esotericisms in countries symbolically or numerically dominated by various national Eastern Christianities. Of special interest would be in such cases the specific local (national) identities of these Esotericisms, as well as their profile in relation to the transnational network of kindred movements. Reactions to (this kinds of local) Esotericisms from the part of the dominant Eastern Christian Churches are also of interest, all the more so, as some of them might in turn engage in polemics deeply marked by discourses common also to some of the Esotericisms themselves, as "conspiracy theories" (e.g. "the Freemasonry scare" in various local Orthodox Churches).

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OPEN SESSION (D. BARBU): Norms and Normativity in the Study of Religion, Part 2

The problem of normativity appears unavoidable in the study of religion. Scholars of religion are confronted with this issue at many levels. At the empirical level, religious practices, traditions and beliefs are not merely representations of the world but entail a prescriptive dimension that delimit the range of acceptable actions within a social group. At the epistemological level, the question of the normative implications of our analysis arises in particular in relation to the power of our categories and concepts to impose an order on the world we observe. At the ethical level, the defense or the deconstruction of particular worldviews – be it the so-called "de-radicalization" or the protection of indigenous populations – prompt the question of the relationship between scholars and their research objects. The panel will discuss the multiple dimensions of norms and normativity and explore the question of their origin, development, and consequences with respect to both the religious and the scientific fields. The participants will approach these issues from different perspectives within the study of religion, drawing on historical research, the social sciences, and philosophical approaches. The following questions provide a springboard for discussion: How do individuals integrate different (and potentially divergent) normative attitudes in the construction of their religious identity? Which is the role of norm conformity and deviance in the constitution of religious groups? Through which processes do religious categories become part of the scientific discourse? To what extent and under what conditions is a non-normative scientific metalanguage possible? In what form – if at all – is a normative position a desirable outcome of scientific research?

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Chair/contact: andrea.rota@relwi.unibe.ch

OPEN SESSION (I. BECCI, M. FARAHMAND, F. PRESCENDI): Gendered eco-spirituality: conceptual reflections

The relation of humans to nature has been one of the most salient and structuring pillars of religious practices over time and space. With the current ecological and climatic crises, we witness new ways of formulating, expressing, integrating and considering such a relation in spiritual and religious practices and discourses. Thereby metaphors and symbols referring to gender are very common. An ecospiritual globalized subculture has emerged fostering images such as the « sacred feminine », the quest for a « divine / sacred androgyny », the notion of « gender complementarity » and harmony with nature, essentialized gender « polarity », the earth being perceived as a feminine entity, often related to mothering and healing. Such observations can be made certainly in holistic approaches but also in environmentalist secular circles as well as in well-established traditional religions. Often, references to ancient times or faraway peoples are claimed. Beyond the apparent fluidity of the associations, switching between male and female, values and nature, a certain fixed binary model seem to serve as a basis. This panel seeks to document such practices and discourses and to question their relation to different feminist - emancipatory views. Thereby, we intend to provoke a discussion around the following questions: The gendered representations of the relation with natural elements (for example: men with fire / women with earth) - are they essentialising? Or, are they differentialist? If so, does it make sense to conceptualize the observed practices in terms of a strategic essentialism whereby an emancipation is reached through embodiment more than through discourses? What are the social profiles of the protagonists of such practices? Which religious beliefs, which ancient and modern myths are at their basis? Which social order is constructed through the ritualized analogies in this realm?

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Chair/contact: Francesca.Prescendi@unige.ch

OPEN SESSION (F. BERNO, A. ANNESE): Multiple Religious Identities in Late Antique Egypt (2nd-6th Centuries)

This panel welcomes contributions that, from different perspectives and methodological approaches, aim to analyze the multifaceted character of Christianity in Late Antique Egypt (2nd-6th Centuries), as well as the dynamics of multiple religious belongings that took place in this specific area. As is well known, the various Christian groups in Late Antique Egypt were involved in complex processes of identity construction (also with theological-political implications). Different groups had different self-conceptions and self-representations, and variously perceived/labelled other groups. Identity construction developed through both interactions and conflicts or polemics: one could think, e.g., to the debates on orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Papers in this panel will address issues that can include: relationships (even conflicting) within and between Christian groups – or between Christian and non-Christian groups – in Late Antique Egypt; self-conceptions and representation of "others" in texts produced by, used by, or speaking of various communities and traditions, such as "Gnostic", Monastic, and other Christian groups, as well as Manichaeans and Jews; the way in which a text was produced, used, or interpreted and misinterpreted in one or more given group(s) – this may include, for instance, debates on orthodoxy and heterodoxy of texts and doctrines, debates on the Biblical canon, or reception/status of "apocrypha"; reflections upon certain key terms and concepts (e.g. "heresy"/"heretic"/"heretical"). Papers could discuss both literary and documentary sources.

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OPEN SESSION (J. BORUP): Post-global Religion

Although transcultural interaction and exchange of people, ideas, practices and goods are essentially part of all religious history, the speed and media of such circulations, compressed in time and space, are more typical of a global (post)modernity. Transnational migration and the increasing representation of global diasporas have furthermore questioned essentialist relations between religion, ethnicity, culture, language and territory. Hybrids, fluidity, liquidity and synthesizing flows are the centripetal forces framing also increased religious pluralization and multi-religiosity in cultures traditionally having been mainly mono-religious. Westernization dressed as universalisation and global harmonization has been responded to by negotiated domestication ('glocalization'), and the study of religion has increasingly been de-protestantized in light of more global approaches to the study of global religion. Ideals of a global world seem also, however, to be questioned and criticised by new political realities. Walls are being built, borders and boundaries are being reinstalled and countries are withdrawing from international cooperation. Insistence on diversity (rather than pluralisation) and assimilation (rather than integration) are part of national, ethnic and cultural narratives favouring closed systems, as are the increasing influence of interaction-resisting groups representing themselves through identity politics. If globalisation was an ideal of a new world order, there seems also to be parallel indications of strategic reactions towards this in a post-global world.

Critical responses to globalisation seem to be also affecting religious worlds. Reports from Pew Forum show more religious intolerance and less freedom of belief, and also religious voices applaud discourses of contraction. What could be termed 'post-global religion' is characterised by the strategic articulation of a re-enchantment of particularity. Just like post-colonial voices were critical responses to Western hegemony, post-global discourses and practices at both individual, institutional and national levels are critical reactions to globalisation favouring the forces of centrifugal dispersion. This can be represented by anti-global religious re-nationalisation, re-ethnification, re-culturalisation, re-traditionalisation, re-racialisation, re-tribalism, re-territorialisation and re-configuration of the codes appropriating religious diversity. It can be seen in discourses and practices favouring monolithic cultural/national narratives, minority suppression, fractionalisation, downscaling of religious freedom and by 'religionisation' of political, cultural, ethnic or gender-related identity politics being turned into sacred authenticity claims. This panel on post-global religion is explorative and invites scholars of religion to think with the term through both theoretical perspectives as well as empirical cases from around the world.

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OPEN SESSION (A. BRAAK): Religious belonging in question: multiple religious belonging as a contested notion

Cultural and religious diversity increasingly inspires people to draw from different religious traditions, leading to forms of hybrid religiosity. Scholars vary in the way they interpret and demarcate these phenomena. One of the most contested notion in the scholarship on multiple religious identities, multiple religious belonging, and hybrid religiosity is the term "belonging". Not only does this term have a different application in sociology of religion and theology; many scholars have argued that the term belonging is not adequate to describe hybrid religiosities. The question about the nature of belonging is expressed on the individual, the interpersonal, the institutional and the societal level.

This open session is meant to provide more clarity in that discussion on belonging in the context of multiple religious identities. We aim to bring together scholars from various disciplinary fields and different cultural backgrounds as much as possible. Paper proposals are invited with regard to the following and related questions:

- Should 'belonging' preferably be seen as something individual, in the sense of 'feeling at home with', 'being related to', 'being connected to' certain religious practices, beliefs, people, and ways of life? Or does 'belonging' require recognition of the individual by the religious tradition that he or she claims to belong to?
- Looking at East Asian approaches to religion and religious belonging, could it be that the latter more interpersonal 'recognition' meaning of religious belonging is related to a specifically Western notion of bounded religious traditions that require more or less exclusive adherence? Paul Hedges has argued that Chinese religiosity could be viewed as 'strategic religious participation in a shared religious landscape'. What would religious belonging look like in such a context?
- Looking from a perspective of 'lived religion', when we see the enormous variety in the nature, intensity and sources of individual religious expressions, both inside and outside religious traditions, is 'belonging' the best word to use? Or should we use an alternative term, such as 'involvement', 'participation', 'commitment', or 'identity' for the relationships that individuals have with their religious sources? What is the relationship between 'Spiritual But not Religious (SBNR)' and 'multiple religious belonging'?
- Alternatively, should multiple religious belonging rather be seen as an absence of religious belonging, as is suggested by the rise of the 'nones' in surveys in the US? Some other respondents claim that their ultimate religious belonging is to God, to their own spiritual path, or to "humanity". Rory McIntee has suggested the term 'interspiritual religious belonging' for such types of religious belonging. More secular scholars such as sociologist Steve Bruce have argued that people's primary belonging generally is to their family, friends or other social group, and that religious belonging is something that varies with the influences of these social relations.

These questions are only partly definitional in nature. They also touch on ideas concerning boundaries of religions, authorities and power relations.

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OPEN SESSION (A. BROWN): Plurality in Ancient Mediterranean Religions

The study of ancient Mediterranean religions is challenged by the issue of plurality on many fronts, involving both the inherent plurality of lived religion and the scholarly tendency to derive categories that yield clearer theorizing while obscuring empirical facts of diversity. The lived experience of polytheistic, festival-rich city states offers an emic reality significantly removed from investigators embedded in predominantly monotheistic systems. Narrative and poetic traditions that emphasize the intimacy and identity of deity and celebrant contrast with material evidence suggesting the range of gods that respond to individual experience and status. Overly homogenous models of civic religion, derived from evidence-rich milieus such as Athens, may problematically serve as de facto standards for ancient Greek religion. Categories better suited for modern times can impede clear analysis of ancient beliefs and behavior; for example, when the dichotomy immortal/mortal is strictly applied to the study of rituals honoring the Roman emperor or other rulers, or when ancient religious persons are too readily assumed to identify exclusively with one religious tradition or to practice a certain ritual with the aim of pleasing only one particular deity.

We propose in this panel that these heuristic challenges hold the potential to become productive pathways for investigation, and invite scholars of ancient Mediterranean religions from prehistory to the early Islamic period to join us in this consideration of the theoretical and methodological potential behind ancient pluralities. Does the addition, for example, of comparanda from lived contexts help close the emic-etic gap between scholars and subjects; do models of materiality offer more nuanced relationships between poetic and material evidence? To what extent do regional approaches to religion beyond the data-rich urban centers cast light on the plurality of possibilities behind a single divine name; is it possible to adjust the use of our own, etc, contemporary categories so that they become productive analytical frameworks? Papers should tie these issues of theories and method to specific case studies. We seek contributions from scholars in the fields of Classics, Ancient History, Religious Studies, Archaeology, Near Eastern Studies, and Egyptology. While not excluding textual evidence, the organizers are seeking proposals that incorporate archaeology, history of art, ritual and/or liturgical studies, and other sub-fields that provide a window into the religious practices of the time. Particular preference will be given to proposals that engage a question from a cross-disciplinary perspective or that highlight important theoretical or methodological issues. Especially welcome are transdisciplinary papers which synthesize a variety of textual, archaeological, and art historical and/or material culture sources to reach new insights into ancient Mediterranean religions. Scholars from all phases of their careers are welcome to submit proposals. Abstracts of 500-600 words for a paper to take 18 to 20 minutes to read should be submitted by email attachment as .doc files to socamr@gmail.com. Abstracts should contain a title and a word count, but no identifying information. All abstracts will be judged in a blind-review process by our Program Committee.

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OPEN SESSION (J. CREEMERS): Secular sensibilities & minority religious subjects

Religion affects people and society in different ways. So does secularity. In a dominantly secular context, secular sensibilities shape the ways people at various levels of society see religion and expressions of religiosity. Arguably, this tends to entail a problematizing of religious identities. As personal a-religiosity or at least the acceptance of a clear division between a religious realm (private) and a secular realm (public) becomes the norm, religious people who ignore or surpass this dichotomy figure in the public imagination as problematic subjects. These problematic subjects – or communities which do not live up to the dominant norms – are by definition members of a minority: either a minority within a cultural majority religion or standing in a minority religious tradition. The problematizing varies to different extents. This panel therefore aims to explore the configurations of a secular society and the problematizing of minority religious subjects by zooming in on secular sensibilities, affects, attitudes, subjects and policies and by exploring their relation to particular religious subjects, practices, discourses, and conceptions of the self and of others. We warmly invite you to contribute to this exercise, giving new input on theory formation on secularism(s) and secularity and/or by offering empirically based case studies from a variety of secular contexts.

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Chair/contact: jelle.creemers@etf.edu

OPEN SESSION (L. FELDT): Wild and Monstrous Identities – Religious Identity Formation and Natural Spaces in Ancient Religions

The papers in this session explore multiple forms of religious identity formation that relates to non-human wild nature, as in natural spaces designated as wild (remote forests, deserts, mountains, the sea, etc.) and as in wild natural beings (wild animals and creatures) comparatively in ancient religions. The aim is to inquire into the roles played by wild spaces and wild beings in relation to religious identity formation, for instance in Christian asceticism and in Mesopotamian heroic texts. We will discuss in which ways and why multiple forms of ancient religious identity formation are reflected in religious texts relating to wild, natural spaces and wild beings. What types of identity formation are developed? Which sorts of categorization of the world and beings are involved? Our theoretical inspiration is drawn from contemporary debates about religion, nature, and space and research relating to the idea of multiple ontologies.

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OPEN SESSION (F. GEISSHUESLER): Ernesto De Martino's Multiple Identities: Between Coherence and Contradiction

This panel is dedicated to the life and work of Ernesto de Martino (1908-1965), one of the most important historians of religion in the past century, and his relevance to contemporary scholarship. In light of growing international interest in his work, palpable in recent research projects on his scholarly persona and new translations of his books, this panel attempts to further propel de Martino into the heart of the Religious Studies as a discipline. One particularly fruitful way of reading his contribution to the study of religion is through the tension between coherence and contradiction. In this panel, we explore this underlying tension as a fascination with crisis, on the one hand, and a tremendous breadth of interests and methods, on the other. In fact, de Martino explored crisis not only in a myriad of different contexts, such as magic, folklore, Marxism, apocalypse, and so forth, but also through a diverse set of methodological orientations, ranging anywhere from history to anthropology and parapsychology. Although drawing on their own expertise in exploring radically different aspects of de Martino's scholarship, the presenters of this panel are all intent on shedding light on this tension between a focus that creates coherence and an openness that invites for contradiction. In so doing, they not only try to return integrity to an extraordinarily complex and idiosyncratic thinker, but they also explore possible ways in which de Martino's approach could contribute to contemporary debates within the discipline of religious studies and beyond. In an age of rapid societal transformations and increasingly strong calls for interdisciplinary collaboration to face them, recovering the insights of de Martino's thought appears to be more relevant than ever.

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OPEN SESSION (M. GIORDA): Space, Religion, and the Internet

- 3) What is the content of IRE curricula and textbooks? To which extent are other worldviews part of curricula and textbooks and how are they represented?
- 4) Is there, within the curricula and textbooks, attention for tensions between some aspects of the Islamic faith on the one hand, and some core ideas of liberal democracy on the other, such as the separation of church and state, gender equality, and the reliability of science? And if so, how are these kinds of tensions elaborated upon?
- 5) How are teacher-training programs for IRE organized? And to which extent are courses about Islam part of the teacher training programs of other RE subjects?
- 6) What are the official requirements for IRE and other RE teachers and to which extent are these requirements fulfilled in practice?
- 7) What are the main objectives of IRE? What are the differences and similarities with aims of other RE subjects?
- 8) Can and should (I)RE play a role in the prevention of radicalization as is sometimes argued? Why (not) and if so, how should this be done?
- 9) To which extent is information about Islam included in non-Islamic RE classes? And how is Islam represented there?
- 10) Which problems occur within IRE today and which initiatives have been taken in the past in order to solve them?
- 11) What is meant with an 'Enlightened' or 'European' Islam? Are current IRE curricula and textbooks compatible with this kind of Islam? And is this a requirement if IRE is on the regular curriculum?
- 12) Under which conditions can IRE be part of the regular school curriculum in liberal democratic states? How should these subjects at best be organized, without infringing on the principle of state neutrality and the separation of church and state?

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OPEN SESSION (F. GAUTHIER): The marketization of religion: transnational and global developments

An emerging trend in the social scientific study of religion is to consider the multifarious ways in which ongoing processes of marketization are shaping the contemporary religious field. Supplying a perspective distanced from earlier theoretical perspectives on secularization, Rational Choice and post-secularity, the marketization approach highlights the ever-growing influence of economics and market ideologies on globalizing societies and cultures worldwide. This panel follows and expands on the work already initiated by the organizers on the effects of neoliberalism, market ideologies, and the ethos of consumerism on the contemporary religious field. While the panel is devoted to the proliferation of market values, imperatives, and strategies within both the institutional religious field as well as in relation to religious phenomena at large, it especially welcomes proposals with a global focus that seek to move beyond the limitations of methodological nationalism. The panel thus especially welcomes contributions focusing on issues relating to the effects of marketization on religion and religious life in contexts of the Global South: Asia, Africa, Near-East, Ex-Soviet Bloc, South America and the First Nations.

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Chair/contact: marcus.moberg@abo.fi

OPEN SESSION (S. JAHN): Regulating Religious Plurality

The co-existence of people of different faiths and beliefs brings multiple challenges for society. The regulation of religious plurality is often interpreted on the level of the (nation) state and state politics, including the governance of religion, which means looking at the issue from "top down". In our panel we want to look at regulation processes of religion from "bottom up" and understand the regulating potential of religious plurality in a double perspective (Richardson 2004): On the one hand religions have their own regulative potential, on the other hand religions are regulated by other fields of society. In this double perspective, the view on regulation is not exclusively directed at political or juridical processes, but also at the religious field itself. The purpose of this panel is to investigate how regulation takes place in the religious field as well as in context of several societal settings.

Regulating religious plurality takes shape in intrareligious and interreligious as well as in religious/secular relations: intrareligiously e.g. as interactions between religious authorities and laypersons or between liberal and conservative tendencies; interreligiously e.g. as interactions between different religious traditions; and in religious-secular relations as the interaction between religious and non-religious actors.

Regulations take place in specific social settings. Therefore, we have to take into account social realities like power-relations. We also have to consider the actual issue of the (potential) conflict, the issue of regulation, what is at stake, such as recognition, acceptance of religious practices and attitudes or claims for visibility. Regulations take place in institutional settings like schools, workplaces, hospitals or prisons or in urban spaces where different religious actors and people of different traditions meet.

In this panel we want to bring together scholars from the Study of Religions with several disciplinary backgrounds interested in research on regulation of religious plurality. We are looking forward to exchanges about reflections on the conceptual perspectives of research: how can we understand notions and concepts of regulation in the field of 'religion' with different disciplinary approaches like Sociology, History, Psychology, Philology, and Geography et cetera?

We invite submissions that deal with such questions in empirical research projects in a synchronic or diachronic perspective.

Papers might address:

- Regulation of religious plurality in historical perspective
- Mechanisms of regulation (dialogue, conflict, negotiation, ...)
- Dealing with religious differences in institutional settings
- Intervening factors of regulation (ethnicity, gender, class relations, ...)
- Conditions that favor regulation on the local level rather than the state level.

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OPEN SESSION (A. JOEDICKE): Religion as political opposition

Studies on religion and politics have demonstrated the engagement of religious groups in political issues. In many cases, research has emphasized the supportive role of religious groups to political order, i.e. as part of cultural hegemony (interwar Italy), as a social force that constructs the political system (post-revolutionary Iran), as ideological support to a powerful political party (USA), as a factor in dominant nationalism (contemporary Russia), etc. However, religious groups can also disagree with political decisions, ruling elites, political systems or even nationalism.

This panel will give attention to cases where religious groups fulfil oppositional roles or understand themselves as oppositional. While contemporary research often focuses on groups expressing radical and militant hostility towards the Western World, the possible forms of disagreement are much broader. Powerful religious groups can support national revolutionary movements (Poland, Ukraine); small religious groups can voice criticism against the dominant political order (Azerbaijan). Oppositional groups are not necessarily violent and it remains open when, or if at all, their viewpoint affects political change. The panel will scrutinize such cases in order to better understand this oppositional role.

What kinds of issues are the object of religious groups' oppositional views and what social forms and means do they use? Criticism can address the political system, the ruling elite, corruption, war, specific laws, social injustice, etc. Opposition can be integrated into the political system, e.g. as parliamentary opposition, or outside as a movement, civil society actor, transnational actors or semi-legal organization. Oppositional opinions can be voiced using different means, such as civil society activism, support of or inclusion in political parties, or the establishment of media. All these activities can be related to the specific religious activities in different ways.

Furthermore, oppositional views develop their power in concrete social and political environments. How do state actors react? Depending on the political system, oppositional groups can face all forms of violent obstruction and prosecution. Nevertheless, some forms of opposition are tolerated in most countries. In some situations, societies succeed in integrating opposition into a constructive dialogue. Are religious groups part of broader oppositional movements or do they represent opposition on their own?

Finally, the public voicing of criticism and opposition affects both the religious group's internal discourses and the competition between religious groups. Religious groups are internally multifaceted and public criticism creates internal tensions. These tensions can emerge because of different opinions or because of the question of appropriate means of opposition. In addition, further tensions arise from the question of whether the group should politicize at all. From the perspective of a competitive religious field, public opposition can make religious groups appealing or unattractive.

This panel welcomes case studies on oppositional religious groups, movements or transnational actors on the micro-, meso- or macro level. The panel supports research that includes the analysis of society and politics into research concerning the religious factor.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: ansgar.joedicke@unifr.ch

OPEN SESSION (I.KEUL): Exploring Religion in Contemporary Urban India (session I)

This panel, comprising two sessions, presents ongoing projects that deal with various aspects of religion in contemporary urban India. The papers in the first

session discuss the role of religion in diverse settings: In the day-to-day life of a Buddhist Dalit community, on various levels of multi-religious dwelling, as well as in liminal moments of potential conflict. The second session explores the dynamics of selected religious sites in Mumbai and Kolkata, looking at struggles over public space, local nightly pilgrimage practices, and affordances of roadside shrines.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: istvan.keul@uib.no

OPEN SESSION (A. KIRSCH): Religion and Revolution: Self-images, identity discourses, and the demarcation of religion and politics in nineteenth century Europe I

The long nineteenth century has been the century of European revolutions and revolutionary movements, and 2018 are important dates to remember: it is the 200th anniversary year of Karl Marx' birthday, and also the 170th anniversary of the Communist Manifesto and the 1848 revolutions in Europe. These revolutions were launched by various streams, groups, and individuals who drew diverse pictures of a new time and a new society. For some of them, the criticism of religion was a stepping stone towards a new society while others aimed to develop new revolutionary religions. As heterogeneous as the ideas and movements were the conceptualizations of the revolution. Still, interpretations of the revolution as a process of modernization soon shaped the public image of the revolutionary nineteenth century as a century of secularization. Within this framework, the Manifesto for instance could only be interpreted as a secular text –even though it clearly stands in a catechetical tradition–, and the revolutionists were seen as a- or antireligious. For the contemporaries, however, the 'nature' of the events in general and the revolution in particular was highly ambiguous.

In this panel, we will pursue the question of the interlacing of religion and politics by focusing on the relation between religion and revolution in terms of self-conceptions and debates on religious and secular identities and belongings, questions of conformity and nonconformity, and changing understandings of religion in the nineteenth century. Contributions will analyze the 1848 revolution considering the revolutionary involvement of religious players and the 'scientification' of religion (Cyranka); we will discuss how Pietist revival movements positioned themselves to the revolutionary events (Kirsch); we will address how the relation between religion and revolution was realized and redefined in opera (Berner) and performed as a secular socialist protest in theatre (Johannsen); we will further pursue the role of Karl Marx's radical criticism of religion in the process of the revolution (Eßbach) and discuss conceptual and theoretical reflections on religion and revolution (Klenk).

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: Anja.Kirsch@unibas.ch

OPEN SESSION (A. KIRSCH): Religion and Revolution: Self-images, identity discourses, and the demarcation of religion and politics in nineteenth century Europe II

The long nineteenth century has been the century of European revolutions and revolutionary movements, and 2018 are important dates to remember: it is the 200th anniversary year of Karl Marx' birthday, and also the 170th anniversary of the Communist Manifesto and the 1848 revolutions in Europe. These revolutions were launched by various streams, groups, and individuals who drew diverse pictures of a new time and a new society. For some of them, the criticism of religion was a stepping stone towards a new society while others aimed to develop new revolutionary religions. As heterogeneous as the ideas and movements were the conceptualizations of the revolution. Still, interpretations of the revolution as a process of modernization soon shaped the public image of the revolutionary nineteenth century as a century of secularization. Within this framework, the Manifesto for instance could only be interpreted as a secular text –even though it clearly stands in a catechetical tradition–, and the revolutionists were seen as a- or antireligious. For the contemporaries, however, the 'nature' of the events in general and the revolution in particular was highly ambiguous.

In this panel, we will pursue the question of the interlacing of religion and politics by focusing on the relation between religion and revolution in terms of self-conceptions and debates on religious and secular identities and belongings, questions of conformity and nonconformity, and changing understandings of religion in the nineteenth century. Contributions will analyze the 1848 revolution considering the revolutionary involvement of religious players and the 'scientification' of religion (Cyranka); we will discuss how Pietist revival movements positioned themselves to the revolutionary events (Kirsch); we will address how the relation between religion and revolution was realized and redefined in opera (Berner) and performed as a secular socialist protest in theatre (Johannsen); we will further pursue the role of Karl Marx's radical criticism of religion in the process of the revolution (Eßbach) and discuss conceptual and theoretical reflections on religion and revolution (Klenk).

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: Anja.Kirsch@unibas.ch

OPEN SESSION (G. KLINKHAMMER): Weakened, strengthened, enriched or unaffected? The (trans-)formation of religious identities under the conditions of interreligious contact (II)

During the last decades, the religious landscape in many European countries is undergoing a fundamental change: While traditional churches decline at least in terms of membership, other religions enter the scene – some of them rather temporary, others seem to be here to stay. This development has been observed by the sociology of religion, and led to, amongst others, the idea that belief weakens in the wake of religious plurality (see e.g. Berger's "heretical imperative", 1979). Such theories usually aim at larger societal developments. But on a micro level, they still leave a huge field to explore: What happens to religious identity under the conditions of religious plurality? What effects has facing a variety of other religious traditions and their truth claims on the individual believer? Are beliefs weakened – as Berger suggested – or rather strengthened, enriched or simply unaffected – as many participants in interreligious dialogue events claim?

In this panel, we will have a look at the micro level consequences of interreligious encounter on religious identities. In this regard, the modes of encounter may be as diverse as their outcomes: Participation in an interreligious event, religiously diverse families or rather incidental interreligious encounters, e.g. on travels or in professional contexts, all kinds of encounter may trigger individual responses and negotiations of the religious identities affected. Also, aspects of one's biography may play out as well as the encounter's framing.

We are looking forward to contributions which explore encounters and changes in religious identity following them, and/or offer systematizing or theoretical approaches to this field.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (C. KÖNIGSTEDT): Religion and right-wing thinking – contemporary composites and constellations

The contemporary swing to the right and the rise of right-wing populism are observed with concern by many. Far from constituting a homogeneous set of political attitudes, connected ideas also concentrate in a variety of extreme right movements like the Identitarian movement and PEGIDA. Beyond that, right-wing ideas may be traced and found in different groups in societies, as held by different actors without explicitly 'right' identities or in products of popular culture and also in one or the other way connected to 'religion' and religion(s). This can be the case, for example, among singular individuals from religious, sometimes pagan or evangelical, groups (Strmiska 2000) or in the rise of a more general interest in pagan traditions and history close to popular culture, but also in the criticism of monotheistic religion from the "New Right" (Wiedemann 2016). This panel therefore invites paper contributions that deal in any defined respect with right-wing thinking in relation to contemporary religion(s). This may concern religious pattern in the political stance, and the reflection of terminological problems or papers that discuss apparent right-wing tendencies in the worldviews, agendas or practices of different religious groups sensitively. The aim is to reflect on the topic of right-wing thinking and religion(s) from an explicitly 'Study of Religion' perspective

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (T. KRUTAK): Christians and the Dynamics of Religious Belonging in India: Looking Beyond Boundaries (Part II)

In a confusingly diverse religious landscape like India it seems easy to single out Christianity with its distinct features and different shades of church membership and layers of organization. Furthermore, the recent politics of the Hindutva movement in India is even reaffirming notions of clear-cut boundaries between the religious communities in India, with a strong tendency to disenfranchise religious minorities other than Hindu. The panel challenges these notions of homogeneity and segregation of Indian Christians by looking beyond clear-cut boundaries and simplified markers of Christianity. It will critically examine the multiple ways of establishing Indian Christian identity as well as practices of belonging in a multi-religious context. The different case studies will survey claims and conflicts of religious belonging in the past and present and trace successful patterns of conciliating different demands of belonging in the everyday life of Christians vis-à-vis other religious communities. Likewise, the panel aims at opening up new approaches for research on Indian Christianities that will critically reflect on the effects of conceptual frameworks striving for describing 'minority traditions' in the context of Indian religions.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (K.LISOWSKI): Religion, Art and Space

The research on the relationship between religion, art, and space has gained increasing prominence in the study of religions in the last two decades, in particular as a result of the visual, material and performative turn in our discipline. This field of enquiry, however, appears split between ontological, hermeneutical and constructivist approaches, which are based on different epistemological premises. A key difference pertains to the different role ascribed by scholars to the agency of objects and space on individuals: Is such agency an inherent quality of objects and space or is it the result of attribution processes? While theoretical questions will also be addressed, the panel will focus on the practical and methodological consequences of the different standpoints in the field. The main goal is to investigate the fruitfulness of various methods for empirical research and to promote innovative strategies at the crossroad of social sciences and art history. Among the guiding questions of the panel are the following: How can agency of objects and space be empirically evaluated? To what extent can the study of religions forgo qualitative and quantitative enquiries among the users or consumers of art and space? How can the methods of art history and social sciences be combined with respect to the question of objects and space agency? The organizers invite papers discussing these issues through case studies, ranging from the museum to so-called "sacred sites".

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: karolina.lisowski@relwi.unibe.ch

OPEN SESSION (M. MARCOS): Multiple Religious Identities in Late Antiquity – with a focus on the individual

It is common to draw the religious landscape of Late Antiquity divided into three groups, pagans, Jews and Christians, clearly differentiated in their beliefs and rituals and represented as static and confronted communities. This perception is due to the enormous influence of Christian sources, which were committed to distancing themselves from the other groups and setting boundaries and clear-cut limits between them. The rhetoric of Christian texts, with its triumphalist tone, contributed significantly to the formation of a paradigm of difference and confrontation. As a result, scholarship has addressed the process of Christianization in terms of a dichotomy confronting Christians and pagans, on the one hand, and the various Christian factions on the other. The most recent historiography (e.g. Rebillard), however, has reappraised this paradigm by emphasizing the fluidity and plurality of Late Antique religious identities and stressing the areas of overlap, osmosis and loans between the different religious groups (Salzman, Sághy, and Lizzi Testa 2016). The construction of individual and collective identities (Rebillard and Rüpke 2015), the individual appropriation of religion, and the strategies to solve conflict and reach compromise (Fear, Fernández Ubiña, and Marcos 2013) are some of the key subject-matters addressed in recent scholarship to interpret the complex patchwork of ancient religious identity building.

The aim of this panel is to examine the multiple religious identities in Late Antiquity with a focus on individuals. It seeks to explore a series of questions. To what extent was it possible to make a religious choice of one's own, outside the social group of belonging? How did individuals feel, define and express their religious identity; which were the itineraries followed in the search for a religious identity? What were the processes and mechanisms of changing religious affiliation? What weight did coercion have in the change of one's religion? What was the relative weight of acts of individual choice or change in the structures of the state in the process of Christianization? What was the role of local religious authorities in mediating individual vocation? To what extent do the narratives of the conversion process allow individual versus collective choices to be singled out? What was the role of proselytizing and teaching in the change of religious identity? And how much, in the last instance, did the change of religion affect the dynamics of the individual's daily life?

References

Andrew T. Fear, José Fernández Ubiña, and Mar Marcos (edd.), *The Role of the Bishop in Late Antiquity. Conflict and Compromise*. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013.

Éric Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity: North Africa, 200–450 CE*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012.

Éric Rebillard and Jörg Rüpke, (ed.) *Group Identity and Religious Individuality in Late Antiquity*. CUA studies in early Christianity. Washington.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2015.

Michel Salzman, Marian Sághy, and Rita Lizzi Testa (edd.), *Pagans and Christians in Late Antique Rome: Conflict, Competition, and Coexistence in the Fourth Century*. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (A. MATTES): Prayer, pop and politics: researching religious youth in migration society

In religious studies and many other disciplines, there is an increased interest in research on the religious engagement of young people in a migration society. While scholars of migration studies are for example concerned with identity politics and processes of boundary drawing as well as minority representation and participation, religious studies rather focus on issues of a changing religious landscape, the effects of pluralization and the diaspora situation of religious communities. Both scholarly perspectives share an interest in understanding the renewed role of religions in Western societies and the ways young people shape it with their religious engagement. Here, young people set a course for the future development of religions in society through positioning and practicing. Recent years produced a vast amount of research on religion and migration. Although often conducted with best intentions, such studies frequently reproduce categories of difference and symbolic boundaries. When focusing on the religion of "others", or on religion as a marker of otherness, scholarly literature often ignores the realities of contemporary societies such as their longstanding history of (religious) diversity. Critical literature observes a racialization of religion in both politics and research. At the same time, religion continues to be a relevant means in young people's identity formation.

For this panel, we want to bring together scholars from different backgrounds, interested in empirical research on migrant religious youth culture. We are looking forward to exchanges across a broad spectrum of scientific perspectives, ranging from macro-scale surveys, to micro-level investigations of young people's religious engagement.

- Papers might address the role of religion in politics of belonging by discussing intersectionality and the negotiation of ideas, ideals and identities among religious youth.

- We also invite contributions on religions in mobile times, which discuss religious youth cultures and their confrontation with/influence on/relation to established religious traditions and communities in migration societies.

- We are also interested in research on (migrant) religiosity in secular societies and religious engagement of young people as an expression of vital/revitalized religiosity and their interactions with secular environments in migration societies.

In addition to discussing current empirical research projects we welcome participant's reflections on the conceptual perspectives of their research, particularly in relation to contemporary debates on migration, religion and youth. Contributions therefore should address at least one of the following guiding questions:

- How can we understand the relation of religion and race within the religious engagement of young people in a migration society?
- How can we theorize age/generation in the religious engagement of young people in a migration society to include it as an intersectional category?
- How can we conceptually approach the religious changes that the religious engagement of young people in a migration society engenders within religious communities and in a broader societal context?

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (I. MIKESHIN): The unseen forms of Russian Christianities

Christianity in Russia is largely represented in the media, public image, and even scholarly work by the dominance of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). However, even the ROC itself is to a huge extent heterogeneous, including a vast array of hierarchies, worship practices, and life-styles. From Orthodox bikers, hippies, political activists, and enshrined or formally adherent laymen to the secluded worlds of distant monasteries, ascetic starchy and starity, students of Orthodox seminaries, and all-powerful Archbishops — all these groups may be legitimate representatives of the ROC or its Orthodox alternatives (such as, old-believers, Russian True Orthodox Church, Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, and others), yet their activities and belief systems go far beyond a stereotypical image of a Russian Orthodox believer.

Russian Protestant congregations count up to three million adherents. Among these there are extremely diverse groups in their liturgy, theology, ideology, life-style, and cosmology. From conservative Lutherans to neo-Pentecostals, from prison, rehab, or homeless ministries to Arctic or Central Asian missionaries, from Siberian reindeer-herder converts to Christian rock bands, from Calvinist or Arminian theologians to faith healers, from the women's dissident movement in the Soviet era to the Prosperity Gospel in the 2000s — the diversity of Russian Protestantism calls for extensive historical, ethnographic, sociological, and linguistic research.

This session calls for the lively discussion on and spectacular cases of Russian Christianities unseen to the media, public awareness, and mainstream scholarly

work. Researchers of marginal and marginalized groups, inside and outside Russia, within and outside of the ROC, are invited to present the ways these groups negotiate their identity, in relation to nationalist, political, and mainstream Christian narratives. Particularly welcomed are cross- and multidisciplinary approaches to the historical, ethnographic, sociological, statistical, and linguistic data.

The session is intended as a start-up forum for the publication of a collective volume on the unseen forms of Russian Christianities by the St. Petersburg Center for the History of Ideas. All presenters will be invited to contribute with a chapter along with other 5-7 authors selected in a separate open call.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: igor.mikeshin@anthro.ru

OPEN SESSION (S. NAEF): Self-identity and Otherness: Shia Approaches to Religious Pluralism

This panel is an examination of the history of Shia views of other religious traditions as well as the contemporary legal-theological reflection about religious pluralism.

The aim is to discuss the theoretical and conceptual issues related to religious plurality from the perspective of Shia Jurisprudence (fiqh) and the theological implications of such a perspective in the construction of religious identity debates. Shias are the minority group within Islam, having broken with the majority Sunnis in a disagreement over the Prophet Mohammed's successors and the role that his successors were to play. With this panel, we intend to reflect on Shia self-perceptions and perceptions of others with respect to religion, covering both historical and contemporary approaches. The papers presented will reflect upon the investigation of the nature and dynamics of Shia normative responses to religious diversity and pluralism and the challenges they face. The aim of the panel is to bring together academics and researchers whose works are related to the topic and to discuss recent theoretical and conceptual achievements in the field.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (A-K. NAGEL): Anchoring in a foreign land: How faith-based organisations accommodate refugees

Recent processes of refugee immigration have given new rise to debates on religion and migration. In many countries both established faith-based organizations and newly founded religious immigrant communities provided emergency support, such as housing and clothing as well as legal, social and spiritual counseling. For religious immigrant communities in particular refugees represent a chance to take public responsibility and to convert their specific cultural competences into a civic asset. On the other hand, they are confronted with the challenge of intercultural opening and concerns about indoctrination or a lack of professionalism with regard to communication and social services. In this session we bring into dialogue empirical research on faith-based measures of refugee aid including qualitative community case studies of newly arrived and longer established migrant groups and quantitative findings about the religious backgrounds of refugee support.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (A. NEUDORFER): Identity, religion and resonance

Although religions are never homogenous and bearing in mind the real existing plurality of religious 'identities', there are certain concepts, which are central for the term 'religion' in general. Jörg Rüpke defines religion as agency, communication and identity (Rüpke 2016). But what does the term "religious identity" mean in the context of different historical contexts such as antiquity and modernity? In a first approach, religious identity shall be defined as a self-attribution by a group or self-classification as an estimation of this sense of belonging. Consequently, the question arising is how identity in general and especially religious identities are created or transformed. One appropriation to this problem is the theory of resonance, a heuristic concept of the analyses of socio-religious phenomena, developed by the sociologist Hartmut Rosa. As a "sociology of self-world relations", this theory addresses directly identity, understood as the relation to one's self, the peer-group, the environment and so-called "higher beings" (god/cosmos/nature etc.). In dialogic-responsive form, these relationships are described as "resonant" (Rosa 2016). However, most if not all forms of resonance spheres are highly dependent on the identities of the actors.

This panel addresses the issue of multiple religious identities in the context of self-world relations in ancient as well as modern socio-religious practices and concepts of identities. It is a contribution to the study of identity within Religious Studies by asking how historical and contemporary actors (individuals and communities) perceive themselves and – as an important factor – communicate their (religious) 'identity/identities' to others.

Antiquity with its temporal distance is, in this context, especially well-suited for comparison, because fully completed processes can be analyzed. Meanwhile studies of contemporary religion complement the topic with a much wider and richer range of sources. The combination of both gives the panel a deeper insight into the genesis and transformation of religious identities in a resonance-theoretical perspective.

By addressing classical accounts as well as alternative voices (past and present) this panel wants to highlight the ambitions and strategies, as well as the heterogeneity and creativity, that constitute the shifting understandings, conceptualizations and instrumentalizations of relation to the self and the world through a discourse on identity, religion, and resonance.

Central questions therefore are:

- What does the concept of "identity" mean in the context of Classics, Religious Studies, Sociology etc.?
- How does the plurality of religion influence identity constructions of the individual and of communities?
- How crucial is the question of identity for understanding religion(s) in antiquity and modernity?
- What role does "resonance" (Rosa 2016) play for the building of multiple religious identities?

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OPEN SESSION (K. NIEUWKERK): Debating, expressing and organizing non-belief among Muslims in Europe and the Middle East

Leaving Islam is a highly controversial topic. When it is done silently and secretly, it may already be a sensitive issue but when speaking out it can provoke strong reactions and be punishable by death. Yet, explicit atheism and the public expression of unbelief is a growing phenomenon in the Muslim world. Although reliable data on the number of non-believers and atheists in Muslim majority countries and minorities in Europe is unavailable, the public visibility of unbelief has increased in recent years. Why do people hide or come out for non-belief? Why has public visibility increased recently? How is non-belief debated and explained in diverse religious and non-religious media?

National policies towards atheism and unbelief in Muslim majority societies are commonly based on a combination of denial and otherization—the very existence of unbelief in Muslim communities is either disputed completely or attributed to the negative impact of 'Western' imperialism. In line with this understanding, non-believers suffer from repressive legislation and prosecution under national blasphemy laws accompanied by a high level of social pressure on and lack of protection for non-religious lifestyles. Nonetheless, recent research indicates a growing awareness among non-believers to assemble and organize themselves in order to protect their rights to freedom of conscience and freedom from religion. How is non-belief expressed, defended and organized on diverse activist platforms and the social media?

This panel brings together some of the latest research on atheism and unbelief among Muslims in Europe and the Middle East. It examines discourses on atheism and unbelief in different social and national contexts and focuses on issues such as:

- the politics of atheism and unbelief in everyday life (social pressure, hiding, tactics of resistance, etc.)
- national legislation, (blasphemy laws, freedom of conscience and freedom from religion)
- media debates on non-belief (in religious media and non-believers own media)
- organized atheism, social networks and movements

(social media, legal institutions, etc.)

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (A. ODERMATT): Contested Religious Belongings in Europe. Membership, Practice and Identity in Comparative Perspective

The role of religion in European societies has become a prominent topic of public and academic debate. Questions concerning religion figure large when it comes to identities, politics and social integration. Historically religion in Europe is a highly territorial feature of social structure. Its standard form is an exclusive social membership role. Currently Europe's religious landscape is changing rapidly. The number of religious bodies and communities is growing. Muslim minorities and persons without religious affiliation take a larger share within many countries. In addition, religious affiliation and religious belonging have gained a new prominence as categories of social identification. Consequently, the importance of statistics on religious affiliation has

grown. Data on religious affiliation, practice and identity are regularly brought forward in debates about the strength, pre-dominance and acceptance of various religious groups.

How different are countries and regions of Europe religiously? What happens to religious practices like church attendance? How religiously pluralized is Europe? And how and why do these changes interplay with social conflicts concerning religious identities and state religious policies?

This thematic session intends to explore these questions in interdisciplinary perspective. Thus, we invite researchers to send proposals on these topics. The papers could be based on large n comparisons across Europe or could deal with selected country cases or present case studies in a comparative manner. Conceptual and/or methodological contributions dealing with problems of measuring religious belonging, practice and identities are also welcome. A spatial or geographical approach is of interest as well. The session includes recent results and improved estimates of the religious composition of European countries originated by the "Swiss Metadata-base of Religious Affiliation in Europe (SMRE)" (www.smre-data.ch).

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (M. OPAS): Religion, co-imagining and controversial relationships

Over the past few years, imagination has become an important concept within the study of religion. Scholars have studied historical imagination, social imaginaries, and technologies of imagination, for example. In this scholarship, imagining has, however, been usually approached as something individual and positive. In this panel we aim to depart from these customary approaches.

Imagination is not something that occurs only within the individual human mind. First, imagining is always also a multisensory bodily practice. Second, even though individually practiced, imagination is always in some way fundamentally social, that is, co-imagining. Imagination can also be negative, destructive, or harmful. Furthermore this co-imagining does not have to take place solely between humans but may involve also other-than-human actors.

This panel examines the concepts of imagining and co-imagining as social actions that may have undesired consequences. We wish to concentrate on how the concept of co-imagining can be used in studying controversial relationships between individual and community, community and society, or human and non-human. What is the role of co-imagining in processes of othering, for instance in relation to ethnic or religious minorities? In what situations is co-imagining taken as false-imagining and how do these situations reveal power hierarchies and stereotypes embedded in people's vernacular and lived religion? We invite both theoretical and empirical contributions examining the notion and/or practices of co-imagining in the context of controversial relationships related to religious and spiritual traditions.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (R. PRANSKEVIČIŪTĖ): Alternative Religious Belongings in the Communist Regime Countries up to 1990

The panel addresses the formation of the diversity of alternative religiosities in the communist regime countries up to 1990. The circumstances for the existence and development of plurality of socio-cultural alternatives in times of Soviet regime were specific, as atheism was the officially established ideology and alternative religiosities were mostly active underground. In the late-Soviet period, the underground activities, including access to alternative spiritual and esoteric ideas and practices, generally existed in parallel, or even jointly, with the official culture and institutions. Beside the officially-established Soviet culture, connected with the Communist Party's aim to control all aspects of the public sphere, there was an unofficial cultural field that was very receptive to the arrival, formation, spread and expressions of diverse alternative religiosities and spiritualities. The "unofficial culture emerged as an autonomous field from inside Soviet society as a result of its own tensions" (Komaromi 2007, 610). The disappointment with the existing narrowness of the official communist ideology and the loss of the absolute allegiance to it led to the formation and rise of unofficial socio-cultural alternatives within the system. Continuing nonformal spiritual seekership and growing plurality of religious choices, was as well enforced by a defense of religious rights and human rights, an area of activity which was given a specific boost by the Soviet Union signing the Helsinki Final Act in 1975.

The panel aims to discuss a wide range of questions related to an emerging diversity of alternative religiosities in the regime countries and their attendant fields of influence: e.g. diversity and multiple belongings within alternative religiosities during the Soviet period; the milieu of alternative religiosity as a space of plurality, diversity and resistance; (open and covert) socio-cultural practices used to express alternative religious identities; alternative religiosity networks and inter-community relations; constructions of multiple individual/group alternative religiosity identities and values under the regime; formation and transfer of diverse religious and spiritual ideas within the Soviet Union and East-Central Europe and from the outside; restrictions, repressions, survival ways and resistance of representatives of alternative religiosities; alternative religious belongings and memory; methodological problems in research of alternative religiosities within the Soviet Union and the East-Central European region, etc.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (D. PRATT): Plurality and Materiality

Religions, or rather the religious life, encompass a multiplicity of dimensions of which the material is one (cf. Ninian Smart). Religion is given expression in diverse forms of art, architecture, image, and a plethora of material objects. For some religious traditions and sensibilities this dimension has evoked an iconoclastic reaction, usually in relation to the affirmation, if not also the imposition, of an exclusive (and so exclusionary) religious ideology. Instances of extreme iconoclasm that result, as witnessed recently in parts of the Middle East when under ISIS occupation, in the destruction of religious objects of art only highlight the otherwise significant role of materiality in religion. Iconoclasm strips away the material dimension and arguably diminishes the life and expression of the religion concerned. Contrariwise, where materiality is embraced and valued the religious life is enriched. Furthermore, it is often in respect to the realm of the material that religions are first encountered - that which is observed de novo, for example, is what can alert the observer to the presence of religion, or at least religious values and sensibilities. Many 'new' religions have been discovered, for example, by asking about what has been observed in terms of ritual practices that, in their sheer physicality (patterns of movement, for example) and the utilisation of physical objects, are expressive of materiality in the religion and so give evidence of religion. Many new religious movements in Africa, for example, came to light this way (Harold Turner).

Even today we may discover anew, in and through engagements with religious materiality, the significance of the rich diversity of religion. For if materiality can be said to be a common feature of religion by way of the general observation of its manifestation, it is in the concreteness and particularity of such manifestation that tremendous variation in religions may be readily discerned. That images, for example, appear across a multiplicity of religions registers images as a common feature. But images themselves give expression to the real differences between, and even deep diversities within, religions. Materiality and plurality co-inhere. In this session papers will address elements of inter- and cross-religious encounter by way of reflecting on either or both of plurality and materiality, whether historically or contemporarily.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (M. PYE): Multiple religious identities in Japan

Japan is known for the wide range of different religions that can be observed in the country. Generally speaking they exist side by side, quite harmoniously, such that multiple religious identities can be cherished within family life and in the experience of the individual. The matter is however not quite as simple as is sometimes supposed. Several religious groupings guard their own identity, demarcating their teachings and religious concerns clearly from those of others.

Certain new religions are presented as being significantly different from existing ones, which is understandable in that their *raison d'être* would otherwise be too weak for a successful launch. But the differences can be any one of institutional, conceptual/symbolic, ritual/behavioural, subjectively spiritual, or a combination of these aspects. One aspect may be distinctive, and others not. Moreover decisions are made, more or less consciously, about how followers may be permitted to take part in activities in the wider religious scene. Is such participation expected, permitted, or discouraged? The resultant patterns may range from exclusivism to tolerance and syncretism or even downright synthesis. For example, it is widely expected that followers of any religion will somehow participate in New Year activities, but just how, e.g. whether or not to visit a Shintō shrine to pray for this-worldly benefits, is another question. Similarly, circuit-based or multiple-site pilgrimage is a popular activity, but in some cases it is tightly linked to one denominational tradition and in other cases it is trans-denominational. Notably, there has recently been a rapprochement between the authorities of Tendai Buddhism, based on Mount Hiei, and those of Ise Shrine, centrally significant for Shintō, and this has led to the formation of a pilgrimage of one hundred stations. Those who go on such a pilgrimage in whole or part are also very likely to have some other religious affiliation or loyalty of their own. As to life-rites, weddings and funerals are naturally a fertile ground for such cross-overs. The purpose of this panel is both to assess this situation in general and to explore some particular examples. The relations between Buddhist temples and Shintō shrines are highlighted. However it is thought that similar questions can be posed with respect to the religious culture of other East Asian countries, and related contributions would be welcome if the panel can be extended.

This panel is supported in part by the International Shintō Studies Association (ISSA).

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (K. RIEGER): Where, who, what: The interrelation of religious identities with religious spaces and practices

Religious practices form spaces, inasmuch they take place in spaces; at the same time, space determines religious practices, as the practices often (usually) are performed in places specifically designed for cultic purpose. People perform rituals and thus partake in shared identities, be it as part of a group with unifying religious performances, be it as individuals who perform religious practices according to collectively acknowledged norms. Religious practices structure time and space, but they also transgress time and space; at the same time, these practices themselves are determined and influenced by time and space.

The panel starts from these intertwined, also paradoxical preconditions of religious practices and asks about the interrelations of these practices, spaces and identities.

- How are religious spaces constructed, what operations change them? What do sacralized and sacralizing objects do in and with built or open spaces? On the other hand, which sorts of sacral and sacralizing objects are attracted by specific spaces? Do the objects already present in a specific space determine the further accumulation of objects of the same category, creating thus, on the long run, traditions within (sacred) spaces?
- What do people with different background (cultural, religious, ethnic, gender, educational, social, else) do in religious spaces and how do they experience them? How can spaces and practices be re-shaped or be taken to form new or additional identities, either intentionally or involuntarily? Which parts of the religious self-conceptions are projected on the venerated deity or deities?
- How do sacred spaces, which are relying on the multifaceted cultural memory, use the perception of temporal aspects (past, present, and future)?

With its focus on formative capacities of religion and religious practices the panel invites contributions spanning the Ancient Mediterranean and Western Asia from Antiquity to the Middle Ages and asks to consider a variety of religious spaces and objects and their continued, discontinued and revived use in, with and for ritual practices and in spaces. Contributors should shed light on the possibilities, contingencies and limitations of the potential relationships of practitioners to the practice, the objects and the spaces and apply culturally comparative approaches, including periods widely separated in historical time.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (F. RUANI): Late Antique Geographies of Heresiology: Fashioning Local Orthodoxies in early Christianity and Manichaeism

"Late Antique Geographies of Heresiology: Fashioning Local Orthodoxies in early Christianity and Manichaeism" invites scholars to a modern reconsideration of the Walter Bauer's hypothesis on the role geography and local administration played in the construction of late antique heresiological discourses. Walter Bauer's 1934 "Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum" opened the door to the re-evaluation of century-old theological assumptions about the primacy of orthodoxy over heresy and underlined the relevance of geographical features for re-thinking Christian heresies. This panel attempts to explore the parallel formation of multiple local versions of "orthodoxy" during the first eight centuries of the Common Era, along three different lines of inquiry.

First, the panel will explore the hypothesis according to which the late antique collection of geographical orthodoxies was patterned upon Roman administrative organizations, forming a network of religious practices and ideologies mostly in the second part of the fourth century through legal means, economic practices, coordinated surveillance, and persecutions.

Second, the panel will inquire the degree to which early Christian heresiologists, such as Irenaeus of Lyon, the anonymous author of Refutations of All Heresies, Philastrius of Brescia, Ephrem the Syrian, Epiphanius of Cyprus, and Augustine, reacted, through their literary positions, to this dispersed constellation of groups, and at the same time, through their cultural critiques of late antique ecclesiastical and geographical diversity, provided the ideological structure for regulating and unifying the network of orthodoxies.

Finally, the panel will open the investigation to the negotiation of the "heretical identity" and "minority" between the Manicheans and Christians in the Roman Empire and the Sasanian Empire, with a special attention to whether Manicheans, in their process of self-legitimization through hybridizing Christian vocabulary and ritual, attempted to form a local community of ascetic orthodoxy of Christian expression.

Scholars working on late antique heresiological discourses, catalogues of heresies, and larger heresiological treatises are invited to submit proposals for papers addressing one or more of the above three lines of inquiry, with direct references to primary sources in any late antique language, but produced no later than 8th century CE.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (J. RÜPKE, K. LEHMANN): Metropolitan Religion Speakers

The 'urban context' is among the tacit variables of the Academic Study of Religions. Only recently a growing number of studies have thematised religion and the manifold forms of religious practices and identities in contemporary cities. Probably with the exception of more ethnographic approaches to religion as well as a number of specialist analyses, most of the empirical work inside the Academic Study of Religions has actually been situated in urban contexts from ancient Mesopotamian religions up to the religions of late modern megalopolises in India, Brazil or North America. This empirical preference is, however, only rarely made explicit. In other words: To a large extent, systematic reflections in the Study of Religions are based upon a rather selected set of data.

The proposed panel wants to counterbalance this implicit bias by approaching a specific sub-set of urban religions in a transhistorical way. On the basis of classic and present-day analyses of the city in Europe (e.g. Georg Simmel, Max Weber, Leonardo Benevolo, Walter Siebel, Hartmut Häußermann, Normann Yoffee) it intends to bring together analyses of the European history of religions in imperial cities:

Zoe Opacic (London): Between Private Devotion and State Piety: The making of religious landscape in the Imperial Cities of Central Europe

Karsten Lehmann (Vienna): An ongoing imperial Heritage: Today's Local Religions in Vienna

Asuman Lätzer-Lasar (Erfurt): The imperial intercity-network of Rome. Distribution of religious practices in a transcultural perspective

Jörg Rüpke (Erfurt): Time in ancient Rome: Between urban and imperial

Based upon their respective research experiences, the participants of the panel want to focus their discussions around two central questions: (a) To what an extent is it helpful to use the category of the 'imperial city' to frame transhistorical analyses? (b) To what an extent does the urban context influence the analyses of religion and religious identities?

Once accepted, the panel will invite a respondent.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (E. SAENZ-DIEZ): Self-conceptions and identity discourses within religious communities and traditions

This panel explores the concept of tradition both within religious, political and legal contexts. It considers the right to freedom of religion as a tool to facilitate the protection of tradition and through this the protection of individual and group identity - exploring ways in which constitutional theory can accommodate plural living together within society. It then identifies how tradition can be manipulated by the state to exclude forms of belief and destroy the identity of specific groups by interrogating the view that traditions can be manufactured. It will seek to analyze how conceptions of traditional religion are utilized by the state to regulate and control non-traditional religious groups. The panel then considers how Islam has informed debate about secular law and secular identity in Europe. It is argued that in ways both recognized and unrecognized the question of Islam has guided European reflections on the fundamental nature of the liberal state and the possibilities of peace. In particular, it will explore how the liberal proposition that the modern state can manage religion and religious difference through the mechanism of secular law has been complicated and, to some extent, upended. The Islamic tradition, as a reified other, has served an essential role in reimagining the nature, meaning, and ends of secular order. At the same time, this encounter has not been unidirectional. It rather represents a dialectical process that has also informed Muslim understanding of the community's relationship to secular law. This leads to the consideration of the ways in which ideas about Islam and Europe have participated in a shared ongoing project of contested self-definition. The panel will give particular attention to three approaches to relating law, religion, and secular order. These might be typologized as law against religion (secularism), religion within law (pluralism), and law through religion (Christian secularity). It then moves on to explore the distinction between tradition and culture, looking at the political and legal manipulation of culture in order to further religious freedom issues and protect group identity, focussing on religious symbols. This involves considering concepts of modernity and tradition - typically seen

as the antithesis of one another. Modernisation is normally seen as a Western phenomenon achievable only by abandonment of traditional and cultural ways of life, and yet, tradition and traditional values have both continued to influence and impact on our lives, even in the modern era. Typically, the relationship between tradition and modernity is perceived as a linear process whereby societies gradually evolve into fully modernised societies with time. But this conceptualisation of society transitioning towards modernity rests on the assumption that modernity has an end point and that tradition and modernity are in fact diametric to one another. The panel will explore the relationship between the two which is in fact much more complex.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (R. ALCIATI, A. SAGGIORO): Religious Normativity and multiplicity

Religious systems are typically part of highly complex sets of normative registers with which they are deeply entangled. But at the same time, all religions are characterized by multiplicity. This implies that religious belonging is a process of acceptance or challenge of norms, because they are perceived not simply as commands one looks at in a detached manner, but instead as practices and situated in a network of practices. In this regard, exclusion, differentiations, particular orientations are important properties of what we can call 'regimes of belongings'. All these properties deal with normative processes and face multiplicity. Normativity can be considered as 'a property by virtue of which a proposition or set of propositions recommend or demand that something is being done or abstained from, praised or blamed, believed or denied, pursued or rejected' (Schmidt 2011: 37). Therefore, normativity should be considered as a question of justification, truth and authority, and religious norms – as any other norms – as established in a given context through complex processes of transmissions, reiteration and innovation (Jansen & Oestmann 2011). Nevertheless, they continuously claim transcendent authority and immutability because of their divine origin. The study of normative discourses in religious systems is further complicated by the fact that norms are communicated in a broad range of media (texts, images, material objects, music, architecture, food...) and by processes of critics of and resistance to these norms. A further element strictly related to the perception of norms is behavioural pattern that applies to situations agents are in, and they prefer to conform with the group. This behaviour seems to be determined not only by unconditional preferences for certain actions, but also by the desire to conditionally conform to the behaviour of a sufficiently large group. In order to gain more understanding in the area of religious normativity, this panel aims to focus upon specific case studies in different religious systems, between antiquity and contemporary era. The contributions should address the following questions:

- What happen to an agent's already-established norms when he enters into a different religious environment?
- How individual choices are usually scrutinised by peers?
- Are norm manipulation and norm evasion similar phenomena?
- Are concepts like perception, persuasion, expectation important for a prescriptive imposition to be successful?
- Which operative taxonomies religious authorities use to shape conceptions of what is appropriate?
- How do scholars deal with operative taxonomies to organize and analyse sources that reflect the dynamic configurations of religious boundaries?

References

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Schmidt, Ulla. 2011. 'Empirical Research and Theological Normativity', in Jan-Olav Henriksen (ed.), *Difficult Normativity: Normative Dimensions in Research on Religion and Theology*, Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 37-64

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (M. SHAKHNOVICH): Identity Discourses in the Religious Landscape of the Last Decades of the Russian Empire

The section is devoted to the discussion of the problems of the transformation of traditional religiosity and changes in religious self-identification in the Russian Empire on the eve of the 1917 revolution. Changes in the religious consciousness associated with the general process of modernization of the country, which began during the Great Reforms of the 1860s, found their embodiment both in the search for the possibility of spiritual renewal of Orthodoxy, and in the anti-church sentiments that led to the growth of anticlericalism after the February revolution of 1917, and also to a significant increase in the number of religious minorities, that were oriented toward a conscious, rather than traditional, inclusion in religious practices. Gradually, at first, contrary to the existing legislation, and after 1917 due to the emerging of legal possibility, more and more citizens of the country were refusing of religious self-identification.

The presentations and subsequent discussions will allow to dissect some general theoretical issues concerning the transformation of religious identities in the period of the collapse of empires; search for new forms of self-identification in the context of the crisis of traditional religiosity; the problem of the coincidence and non-coincidence of religious and ethnic self-identification; the problem of refusal of self-identification on religious grounds; the problem of the individualization of religious spirituality and so on.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (R. SALVARANI): Contrasting religious multiple identities: efforts to mark orthodoxies and differences in complex societies

Multiple religious identities can emerge in multiethnic and multicultural society and can be related with mixed behavior, syncretic worships, contaminations, new rituals, complex self conceptions, identity debates within religious groups.

At the same time, in a dialectic process, different communities can evidence some efforts to contrast multiple and hybrid identities, defining orthodoxies, orthopraxis, ortholiturgies. They can also try to close themselves creating purity's standard, using limited spaces, introducing alimentary restrictions, choosing initiatory languages, prohibiting contacts, relations or contaminations.

Contemporary, religious groups can act strategies in order to modify or to restrain and suppress hybrid and multiple identities. In multicultural and complex societies some identitarian groups pursuit proselytism and efforts to strengthen definite identities by mutable strategies, cultural intervention, dissimulations.

The object of this panel is the resistance to contaminations and to mixed identities, analyzed from an historical perspective in particular and paradigmatic situations. The main aim is to outline general identity, social and cultural dynamics. Papers and discussion will be focused on:

- Ethnic, cultural and national aspects of multiple religious identities;
- Dynamic and changeable aspects of multiple religious identities;
- Processes of definition and clarification of orthodoxy;
- Codifying religious orthodoxy (and orthopraxis) in multicultural and multiethnic contexts;
- Strategies of contrasting multiple religious identities and behaviors;
- Resistances to multiple religious identities within religious groups;
- Processes of strengthening religious "orthodox" identities related with the contrast to multiple identities;
- Use of violence connected with the resistance to standardization efforts;
- Educational activities;
- Legal aspects and interventions.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (J. SARGENT): Debating Form and Boundaries in Early Modern Catholic Pluralism: The Case of the Jesuits in Asia

This proposal seeks to address the gray space between bordered world religions in exploring historical examples of intentional syncretization between early modern cultural and religious traditions. As part of the Counter-Reformation attempts of the European Catholic Church to combat new varied sources of philosophy and wisdom being propagated by a new rising class of intellectuals, the Society of Jesus was formed with the intention of actively harmonizing or incorporating extra-catholic traditions and ideas in part with the orthodox practices of the Church and its Christian ecumen. Traveling out into newly established colonial spaces, missionaries from the Society began to encounter similar depositories of ancient knowledge embedded in diverse but highly developed societies in Asia. Setting their tools onto these traditional sources provided the opportunity for Jesuits themselves to engage in the creation and discipline of diverse Christian communities among varied cultural zones which could still be (theoretically) welcomed into a greater Catholic community. Many of the issues can be identified in the challenge of modern pluralism: tolerating diverse ritual practices, easing the acceptance of new converts, developing the authority of an authentic orthodoxy (often as a minority tradition) within an existing society, were similarly debated, criticized, and defended in this early modern period. This panel will explore case studies in early modern Asia (widely defined as the territory east of the Nile river) to understand how these tensions between unity and diversity in Catholic tradition (syncretized with the non-Catholic) were navigated and realized in these settings.

In many cases, it has been reported that converts to Catholic Christianity in such contexts maintained a number of practices; ritual, cultural, religious and devotional; which existed in the original dominant systems Christianity attempted to enter. In Japan, some continued their prayers to traditional divinities alongside that of Christianity, not seeing any difficulty. In India and China, philosophical and religious debates were entered using indigenous terminology in attempts to demonstrate how Christian "truth" was the natural pinnacle expression of these native ideas. But these "accommodations" or "adaptations" were a huge challenge for a Church newly made sensitive to diversity among minority traditions developing into full blown schisms within the Christian ecumen. Therefore, strict regulation of these practices was made standard, and as in Ethiopia, the efforts in many places to strip out subversive differences was strong. This panel will seek to highlight the early modern debate on these practices and the regulatory tools brought to the task of maintaining a homogenized tradition of unified belief which attempted to maintain a sympathy with the customary practices in extra-Catholic society. In virtually all cases, we can see that these attempts ended in frustration and rejection of Catholic missionaries, but also left intriguing evidence, both textual and communal, of these syncretic efforts.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (A-K. SCHRÖDER): Religions and the sea

The study of religions seems to be a "terra-centric" enterprise. However, in this panel, presentations are invited which deal with the connection between the sea and religions. They might be concerned with water, sea or the ocean as religious topoi. They might focus on fishing and seafaring communities with their religious everyday life at sea and at land. They might concentrate on the sea routes along which religions spread and where religious pilgrimages are undertaken. The sea as well as rivers or wells can serve as a boundary as well as a bridge for the interaction of different religions. Therefore, they hinder or facilitate the formation of different religious identities. Besides case studies, we will discuss in the panel what opportunities are offered by a "seacentric" approach for the study of religions.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (V. SEVERINO): Religion of the individual / religion of the state

This panel aims to approach the question of "multiple religious identities" at the intersection of religion and politics. For this purpose, we intend to test the theory developed by Raffaele Pettazzoni, the leading scholar of the studies of the History of Religions, during the years of European fascisms, which describes two universal religious models, that of the state or that of the individual.

In Pettazzoni's view, two kinds of sacred correspond to two antithetical ideas of salvation and worship: 1. salvation through the state which is a commonwealth in this world, which each individual must be ready to sacrifice himself for; 2. and salvation of single individuals in the hereafter, whereby earthly life can be renounced in order to gain eternal life. The multiplicity of religions can be derived from and described by these two models. At times, religions and the underlying models are in conflict, e.g. in the Western world, Roman religion and Christianity; in other cases, there is either coexistence, as it can be seen in the Eastern example of Shintoism and Buddhism; or syncretism, which claims to establish a unique religious identity.

We encourage authors to evaluate Pettazzoni's theory on religious identities – individual- or/and community-oriented –, addressing empirical cases from early civilisations to the societies of the 21st century, as well as methodological and theoretical considerations.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (J. ALBRECHT): Religious identities in the making: Praxeological approaches to the study of religious identities in antiquity

There is a long scholarly tradition to conceptualize and investigate (historical discourses on) religious identities in the ancient Mediterranean. In contrast, a growing number of recent studies emphasize that the concept of "identity", which implicates stability and coherency, is rather misleading. These works point out that the formation of identities is a continuous, multi-layered, and at times contradicting process, which may be grasped more appropriately in terms of "identification" (Rebillard/Rüpke 2015; Rebillard 2012).

This panel seeks to further the methodological discourse on religious identification by analyzing four case-studies from very different ages, areas, and social contexts. All four contributions opt for a praxeological "bottom up"-approach, which is on the one side focused on the situational formation of identities. On the other side, they problematize the unreliability and ambivalence of our historical evidence concerning the study of identification practices, strategies, and (discursive) norms.

A case-study on an Egyptian priest (IV AD) illustrates the many ways in which a religious practitioner could identify himself in front of different audiences: Facing a Roman tax-official, for instance he was dressed in his traditional priestly robe, while he mentioned, at other occasions, his priestly office not at all, but chose different identities. His case invites to discuss situational constructions of identities and critical remarks on the use of historical evidence. By enhancing the common praxeological approach with social psychology, another study aims to reconstruct and differentiate social, religious and personal identities in Roman Dacia (II-III AD) on the material basis of amulets and other objects connected to the magic. A case study on late antique widows illuminates the unreliability of religious identities as illustrated in Christian literature. Whilst church fathers of late antiquity (IV and V AD) elaborate and maintain a particular and detailed religious identity for Christian widows, a praxeological approach, as provided by this panel, clearly shows that these idealizations and derogations are mere defense against and thus results of the multiple religious identities which these widows maintain in various fields of action, be it social, economic and/or religious arenas. Finally, a study on the Spartan festival of Hyakinthia (V-IV BCE) highlights the strategic elements that facilitate the construction of ephemeral and potentially long-lasting religious identities on praxeological grounds. This potential is fully reflected by the myths, traditions and rituals that the Spartan festival of Hyakinthia braces and thereby invigorates and reshapes.

In the end, this panel draws new conclusions from various theoretical approaches on religious identity. Thereby the panel evokes new questions that lead to new theoretical and historiographical perspectives.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (M. STAUSBERG): Exploring Religion in Contemporary Urban India (session II)

This panel, comprising two sessions, presents ongoing projects that deal with various aspects of religion in contemporary urban India. The papers in the first session discuss the role of religion in diverse settings: In the day-to-day life of a Buddhist Dalit community, on various levels of multi-religious dwelling, as well as in liminal moments of potential conflict. The second session explores the dynamics of selected religious sites in Mumbai and Kolkata, looking at struggles over public space, local nightly pilgrimage practices, and affordances of roadside shrines.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (D. STERBENC ERKER): Plurality of ritual practices and exegesis of rituals in Antiquity

The aim of the panel is to discuss plurality of ritual practices, which a single person performed in various settings (public, semi-public, and private religion). The impact of performance of various rituals on the construction of a religious identity will be explored. In a comparative perspective, the panel will focus on ritual practices in Rome in Greek cities and in Byzantium. The participants of the panel shall explore elements of uniformity in rituals, which were performed at the same time period in various cities for a certain deity or even within one city.

Individuals participated according to his/her social position and gender in ritual activities in different settings, therefore it will be scrutinised what kind of impact the performance of various rituals had on their religious identity. Access to the rituals, which were performed on behalf of the city, could be seen as intensifying political and social position of an individual and strengthening his/hers religious identity. In private rituals, adherence to a family was expressed. Performance of rituals in-between both spheres, within the so-called semi-official collegia, was an opportunity to worship a deity, which could help with personal problems outside the family sphere. Although many details about modalities of performance of these rituals were traditional, the possibility of ritual variations and changes of sequences of rituals will be discussed as well as legitimations of these changes. A dominant legitimising argument for the ritual changes was recurrence to an elderly tradition, which allegedly was being revived.

The panel will also focus on aspects of gender, because it represented a central organising principle of participation in religious activities in antiquity. Men and women had access to different rituals, however, the participation of both genders was seen as necessary to worship the gods. However, some ancient authors present the ritual activities of men more often or as dominating rituals and sometimes marginalise rituals of women. The representations of rituals according to the gender of the participants will be analysed to understand the different perspectives on normativity or marginalisation of rituals. Did sequences of rituals of women differ from sequences of rituals of men? Women offered to the gods sacrificial cakes and un-bloody offerings. The difference between bloody and un-bloody

religiously legitimated opposition to the New Age/ new religiosities and which effects does it have? Are new Age/ new religiosities in protest against religious norms which are considered oppressive? Not least: does the juxtaposition Western – non-Western make sense at all? Are the odd cases to be found elsewhere? The panel is open for papers that address some of these issues with presentations with theoretically grounded and comparative case studies or meta studies.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (G. TROUGHTON): **Missionary Projects and Indigenous Responses in the Asia Pacific**

The past decade has witnessed a remarkable resurgence of historical and anthropological interest in the reasons, practices, moralities and effects of indigenous conversion to Christianity. Rejecting conceptualizations of conversion that would restrict it a priori to a clearly demarcated 'religious' space, recent scholarship on conversion has highlighted the entanglements between Christian mission and modernity, imperial networks and/or state projects of nation-building. While some investigations into conversion have perceived it as a great rupture with the past, others have argued that a focus on apparent breaks with the past tends to conceal the ways in which earlier identities and beliefs were perpetuated and extended through Christian affiliation. Questions have also been asked about the forms of Christianity that were active in these mission encounters; as well as the varieties of Christianity that scholars today are inclined to foreground, or ignore. At stake in all these debates are crucial questions about the nature of the Christianity that was promulgated—and that which was embraced by converts themselves.

In this panel we seek to further advance scholarship on conversion to Christianity by critically examining the interactions between missionaries and converts within particular contexts in Asia and the Pacific. Through discussion of detailed case studies drawn from specific times and places the panel seeks to critically assess the state of the field of conversion research. By ensuring that both missionaries and converts remain included within the frame of analysis we highlight the dynamism of cultural exchange that has tended to characterise mission encounters, in which the terms of engagement have been actively negotiated.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

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OPEN SESSION (E. URQUIOLI, A. LÄTZER-LASAR): **One, Many, and the City: Making and Unmaking Boundaries in Urban Religion**

It has become obvious that ancient Mediterranean urban spaces, roughly from the Hellenistic age to Late Antiquity, hosted and accommodated many religious groups showing very different patterns of interactions ("group styles") and different models of arrangement of the memberships that individuals could activate in different contexts ("lateral" or "hierarchical" arrangements producing situational or normative identities). Yet, these phenomena being now thoroughly investigated, the research has hitherto overlooked the role played by the city in the production of: a) clearly demarcated religious groups; b) fuzzily bordered religious groups; and c) the related religious expertises which were necessary to sustain and instantiate such different grouping solutions for navigating the plurality of religious options.

We do argue that urban spaces are neither inert backdrops nor neutral arenas for the rise of religious diversity and the staging of plurality of "group styles in action" (Lichterhan 2009). Urban "spatiality" rather helps to visualize the fact that social relations do not only craft space but "are shaped by the (very) space in which they occur." (Maier 2017). From this perspective, it becomes possible to ask whether and to what extent multiple religious affiliations, as well as the formation of normative religious memberships, were ways to respond to some specific socio-spatial features of urban spaces. The dense and scattered accumulation of diverse religious signs, the concentrated heterogeneity of signs-producers, carriers, and consumers, the intellectualisation of religious traditions and professionalisation of religious functions as strategies for advancing life-chances and status within a social order: these were all full-blown 'urban-religious' characteristics that were likely to impact on the way grouping processes were designed, habitualised, negotiated, and contested.

We welcome papers from ancient religious studies, ancient history, archaeology and related disciplines focusing on Mediterranean antiquity and dealing with every religious tradition documented in the circum-Mediterranean space within a period spanning around eight centuries (3rd century BCE – 5th century CE). The aim of this panel is to bring the "causal effectivity" (Massey 1993) of urban spaces to the fore in the analysis of the three main foci of the conference theme: a) self-conceptions, self-presentations and identity discourses within religious communities and traditions; b) discussion of conformity and non-conformity; c) religious diversity and the multiplicity of religious practices and representations.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: emiliano.urquioli@uni-erfurt.de

OPEN SESSION (M. WETTSTEIN): **Dance and religious identities**

Dance, or rather what is commonly paraphrased as dance by mostly Western observers, plays an important role in religious or spiritual practices worldwide and throughout history. Research on the relation between 'dance' and 'religion', however, seems to remain a niche topic in the study of religions until today. This panel invites empirical and theoretical contributions to the broad theme of dance and religious identities, considering dance as practice and discourses on dance likewise. We will approach, amongst others, questions such as: Which role does dance play in processes of the formation of exclusive or multiple religious identities and communities? How does dance contribute to the negotiation of religious belonging? How is 'dance' conceptualized in different academic approaches to 'religion', in different religious traditions or ethnographic contexts, especially in relation to other forms of ritual bodily movement and embodied religious practice?

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: marion.wettstein@relwi.unibe.ch

OPEN SESSION (T. WITZELING, S. SUTCLIFFE, M. FARAHMAND): **'Contemporary Spiritualities' and 'New Age' : Ethnographic and Historical-Comparative Approaches to a Transnational Field**

While the first theorists of secularization foresaw the gradual disappearance of religion from the public sphere, others observed a reorganization or even a "return of the sacred" on a worldwide scale (Berger 1994). Aside from fundamentalisms which strongly uphold the idea of "tradition" and strengthen borders, new forms of religious expression have appeared transnationally, most often deinstitutionalized and integrated in civil society: for example, the "new religious movements" (Campbell 2002; Barker 2013), and especially the more diffused and nebulous networks, groups and movements known under the generic terms of "New Age" and "contemporary spiritualities".

The participants in these settings consider themselves more "spiritual than religious" or even "spiritual but not religious" (Houtman & Aupers 2007; Streib 2008; Streib & Hood 2011). Some sociologists speak therefore of a "spiritual revolution" (Heelas 2002), characterized by the decline of religious institutions and the rise of holistic beliefs which privilege the inner transformation of the individual, while others focus on the emergence of a worldwide "spiritual market". What is sure is that New Age and contemporary spiritualities encompass a wide variety of representations that draw on personal development, oriental religions and philosophies, indigenous wisdom like Amerindianism and druidism, Western esotericism, eco-spirituality, quantum physics, and so on.

Recently the imprecise and controversial term "New Age" has set off many debates in the social sciences of religion and is also sometimes rejected by the social actors themselves, as it can be synonymous with a kind of "inauthenticity". Sutcliffe (2003), for example, deconstructs epistemologically the notion of "New Age movement" – a false analytical category that has, nonetheless, come to be firmly rooted in the sociology of new religious movements – and argues that the phenomenon needs to be understood as a field of action – i.e. in relation to surrounding religious and cultural phenomena. Others authors criticize the notion of "spirituality" as a category for scientific analysis, and question the problematic distinction "free spirituality / organised religion", arguing that spirituality must be seen as a form of discipline of the self, which is by no means less social and normative than "religion" (Altglas, forthcoming).

This session seeks to explore these new forms of transnational religiosity expressed through the notions of "spiritualities" and "New Age" from the perspectives of ethnography and the comparative social history of religion. We encourage thus papers that explore at least one of these topics:

- epistemological debates and issues of terminology (with their applications, benefits and limitations);
- models of fields, networks and other forms of relationship – synchronic or diachronic;
- practices such as "syncretism", "religious exoticism" (Altglas 2014), religious and intercultural (re)appropriations;
- situations of mobility and of transnationalization of actors, contexts, objects and images (Capone 2004);
- how culture "shapes" bodily experiences within "contemporary spiritualities";
- gender perspectives on participation and transmission.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: thomas.witzeling@unil.ch

CLOSED SESSION (M. AESCHBACH): **Multiple belongings of German-speaking Muslims: Negotiating religious and secular identity positions**

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Mirjam Aeschbach: National Belonging and the Religious Self. Debates around Muslim Women in a Swiss-German transmedia discourse

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Benedikt Erb: References of Secularity and dealing with secular orders: Positions of German-speaking Muslims between Criticism and Reformation of Islam

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Dr. Lauren Drover: „Liberal but conservative in outlook.“ The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Germany between avowed secularity and conservative religious positions.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: benedikt.erb@uni-bayreuth.de

CLOSED SESSION (D.ATWOOD): Mountain Religion

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

David Atwood: Changing Imaginaries of Religion in the Alps: The Mont Blanc

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Magnus Echter: Call of the Mountain

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Christopher Driscoll: Sacred Sahib: Identity Formation in Himalayan Big Mountain Climbing

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution

Ulrich Berner: Mountains as Sacred Spaces

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: david.atwood@unibas.ch

CLOSED SESSION (D. ATWOOD, L. TREIN): Political Theology within the Study of Religion

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Lorenz Trein: Unfolding Politico-Theological Temporalities of Modernity

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

David Atwood: State of emergencies in political spirituality, or: from Schmitt to Foucault

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Monica R. Miller, Christopher Driscoll: Charles Long and the Transparency of Political Theology for the Study of Religion

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: lorenz.trein@lrz.uni-muenchen.de

CLOSED SESSION (P.BLEISCH): The relationship between school education about religion and the academic discipline of the Study of Religions

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Wanda Alberts

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Katharina Frank

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Séverine Desponds

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution

Petra Bleisch

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: bleischp@eduf.ch

CLOSED SESSION (R. BRACEY): Convenience or Conversion? An exploration of collaborative method in material religion

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Robert Bracey (BM), Dominic Dalgligh (Oxford, BM), Stefanie Lenk (Oxford, BM): Convenience or Conversion? An exploration of collaborative method in material religion

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Christoph Uehlinger (Zurich): Response

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: stefanie.lenk@wolfson.ox.ac.uk

CLOSED SESSION (M. DRESSLER): Comparison as Method and Topic in the History of Religion

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Christoph Kleine

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Oliver Freiburger

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Jens Schlieter

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: of@austin.utexas.edu

CLOSED SESSION (F. FERRARI): Healing Narratives in Asian Religions: Interactions, Circulation, Legitimacy.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: f.ferrari@chester.ac.uk

CLOSED SESSION (A. GOMÓŁA): Polish religious studies thought in the context of the 19th century culture studies

Speaker 1: Henryk Hoffmann & Anna Zaczowska: Polish religious studies in the 19th century – an outline of a synthesis

Speaker 2: Małgorzata Rygielska: Religious matters in Ignacy Czerwiński's writings

Speaker 3: Anna Zaczkowska: Agaton Giller on shamanism

Speaker 4: Anna Gomóla: Jan Michał Witort and his studies on animism

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: anna.anita.gomola@gmail.com

CLOSED SESSION (C.HACKETT): Empirical studies of multiple religious identities around the world

Following applications are allowed exclusively:

- Linda Woodhead, Lancaster University l.woodhead@lancaster.ac.uk: "I'm just me" -- "no religion" and the pluralization of identity amongst younger Britons

- Anna Sun, Kenyon College suna@kenyon.edu: "The Puzzles of Religious Identity in Contemporary China"

- Conrad Hackett, Pew Research Center, chackett@pewresearch.org: What do surveys reveal? Multiple religious identities are rare but syncretic religious practice is widespread

- Peter Nynäs, Åbo Akademi University peter.nynas@abo.fi: Variations of double religious identifications globally

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: chackett@pewresearch.org

CLOSED SESSION (G. HARVEY): Indigenising movements in Europe 1

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Jenny Butler (University College Cork): "Entering the Magic Mists: Irish Contemporary Paganism, Celticity and Indigeneity"

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Graham Harvey (The Open University, UK): "Bear Feasts in a land without (wild) bears: experiments in creating animist rituals"

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Suzanne Owen (Leeds Trinity University, UK): "Is Druidry Indigenous? The Politics of Pagan Indigeneity Discourse"

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution

Angela Puca (Leeds Trinity University, UK): "'Witch' and 'shaman': discourse analysis of the use of indigenizing terms in Italy"

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: graham.harvey@open.ac.uk

CLOSED SESSION (G.HARVEY): Indigenising movements in Europe 2

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Rasa Pranskevičiūtė (Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania): "Negotiating the Prehistoric Past for the Creation of the Global Future: Manifestation of Anastasian Nationalistic and Traditionalistic Ideas in Eastern Europe"

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Christina Welch (University of Winchester, UK): "Powwowing My Way: The lived expressions of North American Indian spirituality and ritual by European Powwow enthusiasts"

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Amy Whitehead (University of Winchester, UK): "Indigenizing the Goddess: reclaiming territory, myth and devotion in Glastonbury"

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution

Bjørn Ola Tafjord (University of Tromsø, Norway): Response

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: graham.harvey@open.ac.uk

CLOSED SESSION (A. HERMANN): Labeling religion: Migration and ascriptions of religious identities in contemporary Europe

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Rafaela Eulberg: Tower politics: Labeling processes as invisible builders of the sacred architecture of Hindu groups

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Annika Jacobsen: Arabic refugees in Germany: Ascription processes and religious identities

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Petra Tillessen: Building borders by searching for bridges? Labeling religion in the education of conflict managers

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution

Giovanni Maltese: Response

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: adrian.hermann@uni-bonn.de

CLOSED SESSION (P. HETMANCZYK): From local interaction to globalized scandal: negotiating religious identities in a Swiss secondary school. Session I

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Katharina Frank/Daniela Stauffacher/Urs Weber: Omitting a handshake in public school. A view from systems theory

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Anne Kühler/Martin Bürgin: Shaking hands as "tradition", "custom", and "identity" in Juridical speech

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Mirjam Aeschbach: (Not) shaking hands and the politics of gender

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: philipp.hetmanczyk@uzh.ch

CLOSED SESSION (T. JENSEN): Religious education in Russia in post-secular context

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Elena Stepanova: Moral education and religious education: rivals or partners?

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Andrey Menshikov: Controversies of secular ethics

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Olga Yakimova: In Search of Alternative to Religious Education in European Union and Russia

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution
Alexander Palkin: Discussions on implementation of theology in higher education in Russia.
Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours
Chair/contact: stepanova.elena.a@gmail.com

CLOSED SESSION (C. KLEINE): Muslim Secularities: New Inquiries into Muslim Engagements with Religion, Politics and the Social

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution
Markus Dressler: Muslim Secularities. Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution
Negin Yavari: The Political in Medieval Islamic Thought

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution
Tijana Krstic: Are 'Confessionalization' and 'Secularity' Useful Heuristic Devices for Studying Dynamics in Early Modern Ottoman Islam?

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution
Geetanjali Srikantan: Experiencing Religion through the Secular. Legal Consciousness in the Production of Anglo-Muhammadan Law
Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours
Chair/contact: markus.dressler@uni-leipzig.de

CLOSED SESSION (A. KORTE): Negotiations of Religious and Secular Gender Scripts in Women's Conversions in Contemporary Western Europe.

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution
Lieve Schrijvers: 1) Gender Scripts and the Construction of Sexual Ethics among Evangelical and Muslim Converts in the Netherlands

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution
Mariecke van den Berg: 2) Scripting Religious and Gender Transformations: Comparing Transgender and Conversion Narratives

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution
Nella van den Brandt: 3) Producing Differences: Narratives about Women's Conversion across West-European
Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours
Chair/contact: h.p.vandenbrandt@uu.nl

CLOSED SESSION (K. KUSMIERZ): Sacred Places and Multiple Religious Identities: Past and Present

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution
Katharina Heyden: Shared holy places and their impact on religious identities in late antiquity (deutsch: Multireligiöse heilige Orte und ihr Einfluss auf religiöse Identitäten in der Spätantike)

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution
Angela Berlis: Contested Holy Places: Sacred and Secular Transitions in Modernity (deutsch: Umstrittene heilige Orte: Übergänge vom Sakralen zum Säkularen und retour)

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution
Johannes Stückelberger: Churches as Places of Multiple Religious Identities? (deutsch: Kirchen als multireligiöse Räume?)

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution
David Plüss: Space, Ritual and Religious Identity (alternative: Churches as Places of Multiple Religious Identities in Theological and Church Perspective)
Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours
Chair/contact: david.pluess@theol.unibe.ch

CLOSED SESSION (K. LEHMANN): Re-configuring core concepts of the Study of Religions? - More than 30 years after the 'cultural turn'

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution
Dirk Johannsen: Re-configuring the numinous

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution
Sebastian Schüler: Re-configuring evolution as a core concept for the study of religion

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution
Magnus Echlert: Religion as 'wastage' - an evolutionary perspective

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution
Karsten Lehmann: Systematic Comparison as a theoretical enterprise
Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours
Chair/contact: karsten.lehmann@kphvie.ac.at

CLOSED SESSION (A. LONGKUMER): Indigenous Religion(s). Local Grounds, Global Networks

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution
Professors Siv Ellen Kraft and Greg Johnson: Introduction to the field of Indigenous Religion(s)

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution
Dr. Arkotong Longkumer: The Time of the Nation: Indigenous Sovereignty and the Effects of the Nation-state

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution
Professor Greg Alles: Celebrating Global Indigeneity Locally: Vishwa Adivasi Divas

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution
Professor Bjørn Ola Tafjord: Connecting Indigeneities while Conducting Religious Studies in Talamanca, Tromsø, and Elsewhere
Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours
Chair/contact: A.Longkumer@ed.ac.uk

CLOSED SESSION (M. MAEDER): The Highgate Cemetery in London: Diversity of Religious Practices in a Single Space, Part I

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution
Carla Danani: Cemetery as Landscape, Tale, Threshold: Link between the Living and Dead Society

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution
Alberto Saviello: Highgate Cemetery's Landscape as a Matrix of Cultural Imagination

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Natalie Fritz: Highgate Cemetery: A City of Angels

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution

Daria Pezzoli-Olgjati: Funerary Steles as Places of Memory and Social Diversity

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: ma.maeder@unibas.ch

CLOSED SESSION (V. MAKRIDES): Esotericism and Eastern Christianities I: Traditionalism and Neo-Hesychasm

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Bogdan Tataru-Cazaban, "Traditionalism and the Inner Dimension of the Orthodox Tradition according to Fr. André Scrima's Hermeneutics"

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Ionut Bancila, "Neo-Hesychast Meditation in Romania: the case of Vasile Andru"

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Marco Toti, "Metapolitics as Esotericism through Geopolitics. A. Dugin and C. Mutti's Eurasian Perspective"

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: ionut.d.bancila@googlemail.com

CLOSED SESSION (K. MYKYTJUK): How to foster peaceful coexistence of differing religious and secular perspectives: Results from latest empirical studies

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Michael Ackert: One couple - two religions: Preliminary data from an online survey

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Anna-Konstanze Schröder, Silvia Martens: Threatening or enriching encounters: Xenophobia and Xenosophia between Christians, Jews and Muslims in Switzerland

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Pascal Tanner: Secularism as an ideological regime: Social structure, values, and political claims in Switzerland

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution

Karin Mykytjuk: Religious symbols in the public sphere: Results from a study on commission of the Federal Department of Justice and Police

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: karin.mykytjuk@ager.unibe.ch

CLOSED SESSION (A. NEUMAIER): Weakened, strengthened, enriched or unaffected? The (trans-)formation of religious identities under the conditions of interreligious contact (I)

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Gritt Klinkhammer, Anna Neumaier: The effect of interreligious encounter on religious identity. On Christian and Muslim participants in interreligious dialogue.

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Madlen Krüger: „We are not as strict as (...)” - Challenging devoutness as a consequence of interreligious encounters between Buddhists, Muslims and Christians in Myanmar.

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Kim David Amon: The religious dimension of narrative identity formation. Examining youth in the multi-religious city.

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution

Bianca Kappetijn: Between dialogue and exclusion - Young peoples' perception of religious difference in various contexts.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: neumaier@uni-bremen.de

CLOSED SESSION (P. NYNÄS): Young Adults and religion in a global perspective: socialization of religion and beyond

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Maria Klingenberg: Young adults as a social category: a critical assessment

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Marcus Moberg: Religion and Social Media in a Global Perspective: Online and Offline

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Karoliina Dahl: The religious socialization of the non-religious young adults

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution

Marlijn Meijer: Gendered identities and intersectionality: a critical approach

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: peter.nynas@abo.fi

CLOSED SESSION (P. NYNÄS): Young adults in a global perspective: a critical discussion of research on religion from the perspective of a mixed-method study of contemporary religiosities

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Mika Lassander: A Relational Analysis of Subjective Worldviews

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Ruth Illman: Multiple religious identities among young adults: a cross-cultural comparison

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Sofia Sjö: Religious pluralism and gender – beyond discussions of more or less

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: peter.nynas@abo.fi

CLOSED SESSION (S. OLSSON): "Islamic radicalisation" and extremism from a study of religions perspective

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Approaching extremist and radicalized Islam

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Growing importance of the Sunni-Shia divide in the study of violent interpretations of Islam

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Identifying master narratives in radicalization studies

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution

"We have avenged the Prophet!": Sacred values and radicalisation processes

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: jonas.svensson@lnu.se

CLOSED SESSION (G. PEDRUCCI): Multiple religious and maternal identities: othermothers, self-conceptions, conformity and non-conformity

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Florence Pasche Guignard and Giulia Pedrucci: Multiple religious and maternal identities as male mothers and othermothers: case studies from the ancient Greek and Roman worlds

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Pascale Engelmajer: Visākḥā Migāramātā: Mothering as the Spiritual Path

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Olivera Koprivica: When a daughter becomes a mother to her own mother: Spiritual motherhood in Orthodox female monasticism

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution

Francesca Sbardella: Response

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: florence.pasche@gmail.com

CLOSED SESSION (H.PESONEN): Researching Popular Culture and Religion. Discourses, Negotiations, and Reception.

Minja Blom: Vampires, values and meanings - Researching modern religiosity in television and fandom.

Heidi Rautalahti: How video games changed my life – You Tube-videos as life-changing testimonials.

Essi Mäkelä: Parody and fiction-based, invented and authentic-fakes: Negotiating emic and etic concepts when researching new religious movements.

Reeta Frosti: Francis Bacon and the Church Universal and Triumphant. From 17th century's popular fiction to a contemporary religious movement.

Nina Maskulin: Narrating possible future worlds. Reception of an Apocalyptic film among teenagers in Finland.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: heidi.rautalahti@helsinki.fi

CLOSED SESSION (M. S. RAHMANI): Conversion Narrative

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Ines W. Jindra: How do People Change their Lives? The Role of Biographical Sociology in Understanding the Role of Conversion in the Trajectories of People Afflicted by Homelessness

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Géraldine Mossière: Conversion to Islam among youth: turning the discourse on intersectionality into action

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Masoumeh Sara Rahmani: Tacit Conversion to Goenka's Vipassana Movement

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: masoumeh.sara.rahmani@gmail.com

CLOSED SESSION (S. RAHMANI): Multidisciplinary Understanding of Unbelief

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Benjamin Grant Purzycki and Adam Baimel: Kernels of Doubt: Cross-cultural Variation in Religiosity

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

David Herbert and Josh Bullock: Reaching for a New Sense of Connection? The Sociality of Unbelief

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Masoumeh Sara Rahmani and Miguel Farias: Mindfulness Meditation: A secular religion for non-believers?

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution

Jesse M. Bering, Evan Balkom, Victoria Alogna, Samantha Smith, and Jamin B. Halberstadt: When Skepticism is Threatened: Reconciling Personal Anomalous Experiences with a Scientific Worldview

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: masoumeh.sara.rahmani@gmail.com

CLOSED SESSION (A.ROTA): Norms and Normativity in the Study of Religion, Part 1

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Daniel Barbu: Teaching Contempt: Emotions and the Construction of Religious Identities

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Nicolas Meylan: t.b.a.

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Monika Amsler: On the Normativity of Classical Logic in the Study of Religion and the Difficulty to Think Out of the Category.

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: andrea.rota@relwi.unibe.ch

CLOSED SESSION (A. SAVIELLO): The Highgate Cemetery in London: Diversity of Religious Practices in a Single Space, Part II

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Ann Jeffers & Sean Ryan: Animal, Vegetable, or Mineral? Performativity of Emblems in Highgate Cemetery

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution

Paola von Wyss-Giacosa: Requiescant in Pace: The Representation of Nature as a Socio-Religious Practice

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution

Marie-Therese Mäder: Public Tours at Highgate Cemetery: Guiding Tourists through a Historic-Religious Site

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: Alberto.Saviello@fu-berlin.de

CLOSED SESSION (U. SCHRÖDER): Christians and the Dynamics of Religious Belonging in India: Looking Beyond Boundaries (Part I)

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution

Writing the History of Indian Christianity: Issues of Belonging and Representation

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution
Christian, Nationalist, Kanarese, Lingayat? Dynamics of Religious Belonging in Two Christian Communities of Karnataka, 1920-1930

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution
Go where you belong! Conversion Claims, Multiple Belonging and Legal Christianization in Contemporary Central India

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution
Formations of Christian Identities Within the Syro-Malabar Church and the Rise of Healing Retreats
Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours
Chair/contact: u.schroeder@fh-hermannsburg.de

CLOSED SESSION (Ü. VALK): Vernacular expressivity, tradition and institutional authority: ambiguities of belonging in vernacular religion

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution
Ülo Valk: Introduction: Vernacular knowledge, belonging and epistemological uncertainty: understanding vernacular religion through variation

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution
Alevtina Solovyeva: Black and yellow faith in Mongolian everyday life: motives of competition and cooperation

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution
Baburam Saikia: Rituals, narrative variation and tensions among the institutional authorities: An ethnographic analysis of Kalasamhati Sattras of Assam

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution
Madis Arukask: Perception of nature and communication with trees in folk Christianity of Finnic peoples
Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours
Chair/contact: ulo.valk@ut.ee

CLOSED SESSION (K. VISSCHER): Deregulating European master narratives of diversity: fringes and mainstream in genealogical perspective

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution
Breaking down boundaries: occultism and the global impact of the Theosophical movement (Tim Rudbøg, University of Copenhagen)

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution
Identity building by modern prophets with cosmic-messianic expectations: spiritual entrepreneurs in the Netherlands and Denmark. (Klaran Visscher, University of Groningen)

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution
To be decided (Dave Vliegenthart, University College Maastricht (not yet confirmed))

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution
The Impact of Romantic Natural Philosophy on Contemporary Animistic Spiritualities and Ecological Worldviews. (Kocku von Stuckrad, University of Groningen)
Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours
Chair/contact: k.a.visscher@rug.nl

CLOSED SESSION (R. WALTHERT): «Reflecting on Communal Identities – Comparing different Methods and Approaches in the Study of Religious Communities»

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution
Yuval Katz-Wilfing (University of Vienna): Reexamining Giur – Shifting Meanings and Notions of Conversion in Late-Antiquity Judaism

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution
Katharina Limacher (University of Luzern): Diglossic Hinduism Revisited: Death Rituals in Hindu Communities in Switzerland and Austria.

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution
Veronika Rückamp (University of Göttingen): Space and Things: Researching Material Religion in Immigrant Muslim Communities.

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution
Martin Stechauner (University of Vienna, Hebrew University of Jerusalem): The Sephardic Community of Vienna – Ottoman Expats, Austrian Jews or an Ethnic-Religious Minority Sui Generis?
Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours
Chair/contact: katharina.limacher@gmail.com, buenos.aires0708@gmail.com

CLOSED SESSION (U. WEBER): From local interaction to globalized scandal: negotiating religious identities in a Swiss secondary school. Session II

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution
Philipp Hetmanczyk: Ruling out religious diversity in the name of "religious diversity"

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution
Lea Stahel: Context collaps: The globalization of a local incident

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution
Dominik Mueller: Handshaking and negotiating authority in the local Muslim community
Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours
Chair/contact: philipp.hetmanczyk@uzh.ch

CLOSED SESSION (H. ZANDER): Life reform networks in transnational context: c. 1900-c. 1970

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution
Bernadett Bigalke: Colon hygiene, breathing and Vegetarian diet as religious practices: David Ammann as missionary for Mazdaznan in Leipzig around 1900

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution
Steven Sutcliffe: Diet and Life Reform: the Scottish Vegetarian Dugald Semple (1884-1964)

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution
Stefan Rindlisbacher: The Swiss life reformer Werner Zimmermann as a popularizer of spiritual body practices: Meditation, deep breathing and karezza

Speaker 4: Title of Contribution
Eva Locher: Body and Self – Life reform after 1950 as (religious) counselling?
Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours
Chair/contact: stefan.rindlisbacher@unifr.ch

CLOSED SESSION (H. ZANDER): Plurality and Multiplicity within the Theosophical Society in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

Speaker 1: Title of Contribution
Orientalist Aggregates: Anattā in the Early Theosophical Society (Julie Chajes)

Speaker 2: Title of Contribution
Eastern, Western, global identities? (Ulrich Harlass)

Speaker 3: Title of Contribution
The Lives of Annie Besant. A Critical Contribution to the Idea of "Multiple Identities" (Yves Mühlematter)

Deadline: 15th Jan 2018, 11:59:59pm CET, *Time left:* 6 days 6 hours

Chair/contact: yves.muehlematter@unifr.ch