

RaT-Newsletter



Dear members and friends of RaT,

In December, now that the days are getting shorter and colder and the festive season is approaching, we may all find some time to reflect upon the past year and contemplate what we wish for the year ahead.

Regarding the prospects of RaT, we are especially happy and proud to announce that the research centre's funding has been guaranteed for the next period of four years and that we can thus continue all our activities.

In this second newsletter of the winter term, we therefore take the opportunity to report on new publications, current research projects and upcoming events of RaT members. Another so-called *free contribution* to our journal JRAT, which we will introduce to you in this newsletter, has been published in advance on Brill's website. If you are still looking for reading material for the holidays, our upcoming JRAT issue "Religion and Disease" will be out within the next few days.

We are very pleased that our cooperation with *derStandard* has been off to a good start - two of our blog posts are already published on their website as you will come to see scrolling down this newsletter.

We will also present to you our latest [blog contributions](#) further down in this newsletter: learn about Hans Holbein's painting "The Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb", which left deep traces in the work of the famous Russian writer Dostoevsky, and about "Times of Distanced Judaism", referring to challenges that the pandemic poses to Jewish laws regarding prayers and rituals.

Finally, we would like to draw your attention to the current job openings of the Vienna Doctoral School of Theology and Research on Religion VDTR. We are pleased to inform you that the VDTR, of which RaT is a founding member, is able to advertise four fully-funded positions of university assistants (prae-doc) for a period of three years and we kindly ask you to forward this information to interested parties.

We wish you a pleasant reading, an enjoyable winter and - *Happy Holidays!*

Lisa Achathaler, Kurt Appel, Hannah Bleckenwegner, Jakob Deibl, Martin Eleven, Daniel Kuran, Katharina Limacher, Marian Weingartshofer.

Please consider forwarding our newsletter to those interested in the topics we work on!

JRAT

Interdisciplinary Journal for
Religion and Transformation
in Contemporary Society



Free contribution:

Gruber, Judith: *White Innocence / White Supremacy. Exploring the Theo-political Intersections of Race and Salvation*, in: *JRAT* 7 (2/2021).

This article starts from the observation that current debates about race and racism are often couched in soteriological terms such as guilt and forgiveness, or confession and exoneration, and it argues that this overlap calls for theological analysis. Using the debate about Achille Mbembe's disinvitation from the German art festival 'Ruhrtriennale' 2020 as a case that is typical of a specifically Western European discourse on race, it first sketches a brief genealogy of the modern/colonial history of religio-racialisation and its intersections with Christian tradition, in which racial categories were forged in soteriological discourses, and in which, in turn, soteriological categories were shaped by racist discourses. It proposes that in this process, Christianity, Whiteness and salvation were conflated in a way that has sponsored White supremacy, disguised as innocence.

[Link to the publication.](#)

Reception of JRAT in Indonesia (Rüdiger Lohlker)

The Indonesian organization *Bayt ar-rahmah* wrote on their website about Rüdiger Lohlker's article titled "Fiqh Reconsidered: Indigenization and Universalization of Islamic Law in Indonesia":

"VIENNA, Austria: In July of 2021, one of Europe's foremost scholars of jihadism and Islamic law published an in-depth analysis of the indigenization of Islam within Indonesia and its recent emergence upon the world stage as the Humanitarian Islam movement. Humanitarian Islam offers a unique, dynamic and universal alternative to the supremacist, political understanding of Islamic law that animates Islamist ideology and has trapped much of the Muslim world in a cycle of authoritarianism, underdevelopment and violence for centuries."

[Reading can be continued here.](#)

For further information on JRAT, you can find our new page on facts and figures [here](#).

RaT BLOG

RaT Blog contributions on derStandard.at:

Der religiöse Sozialist: Der "kleine" Otto Bauer

In his text, **Cornelius Zehetner** gives a brief insight into the life and work of the religious socialist Otto Bauer (1897-1986, also called "little Otto Bauer"), who unfortunately often seems to be forgotten behind his more famous namesake. A first edition of selected writings by Otto Bauer, edited by Cornelius Zehetner, aims to change this.

Theologie und Psychiatrie: Wie können traumatische Erfahrungen verarbeitet werden?

How can traumatic experiences be (somewhat) processed? **Lisa Achathaler** presents us with a look at this increasingly important topic at the crossroads of theology and psychiatry.

[Link to derStandard.at.](#)

PUBLICATIONS



Appel, Kurt: *Quando il cielo si squarcia. Il corano come evangelio per i cristiani.* Bologna: EDB 2021.

This theological manifesto asks what it means that after Christianity, a religion - Islam - is founded with the claim of revelation that refers to Jesus and the Christian faith. Is there a revelation of God in the Qur'an and can Christians recognise a gospel in it? What does it mean when Christians and Muslims speak together in the name of God, as in the case of Pope Francis and the Grand Sheikh of the Al-Azhar Al-Tayyeb Mosque? This book also raises two other questions: whether Christians and Muslims should view their faith in the light of each other, and what it would mean for an interpretation of Christian revelation to view the Qur'an as a revelation willed by God.

[Link to the publication.](#)



Ednan Aslan (Hg.)

**Handbuch
Islamische Religionspädagogik**
Teil 1



Aslan, Ednan (ed.): *Handbuch Islamische Religionspädagogik*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2021.

This handbook is a collection of contributions by predominantly Muslim religious educators from German speaking countries. All of the contributors are actively involved in the development of Islamic religious education and are pioneers in their field who are working in locations and under conditions which are not always encouraging. The contributions also include reflections on learning processes the authors underwent while establishing their work at European universities. This book is aimed at teachers, students and university staff who are involved in Islamic religious education on both a theoretical and practical level. It is intended to serve as an introduction to Islamic religious education.

[Link to the publication.](#)

PÄDAGOGISCHE
HORIZONTE

Ausgabe 45/1, 2021
ISSN (print) 1611-0917
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Pädagogische Horizonte



Themenheft
»Die gesellschaftliche Erzeugung
von religiös-weltanschaulicher Vielfalt«
Anne Koch & Karsten Lehmann (Hrsg.)

Ein Journal der Privaten Pädagogischen Hochschule der Diözese Linz, Austria



**Koch, Anne / Lehmann, Karsten (eds.):
Themenheft "Die gesellschaftliche Erzeugung von religiös-weltanschaulicher Vielfalt", in: *Pädagogische Horizonte*. Linz: Private Pädagogische Hochschule der Diözese Linz 2021.**

From various disciplinary contexts, the contributions focus particularly on two dimensions of the systematic discussions about religious-ideological diversity. On the one hand, they focus on how religious diversity manifests itself at different levels of society and how it is dealt with. On the other hand, they are concerned with the contribution that interreligious initiatives and debates can and - depending on the perspective - should make in dealing with religious diversity.

More information about the workshop 'Religion_Pluralität', which formed the basis for this publication, can be found [here](#).

[Link to the publication.](#)



Lehner, Marie / Mattes, Astrid / van Breugel, Ilona et al.: *Where I Belong: Identification Processes of Young Volunteers in Super-Diverse Cities*, in: *Voluntas* (2021).

In the context of super-diverse cities, scholars and policy makers are increasingly interested in the potential of volunteering to establish identification for newcomers and locals alike. In this paper, we address the question of how young volunteers in Rotterdam and Vienna negotiate belonging within their super-diverse surroundings. Our exploratory study builds on a cross-national research project in which we collected qualitative interview data from volunteering youth. We follow a weak-theory approach and conceptualise belonging as emotional, procedural, and relational. We trace identification

processes of newcomers and locals in terms of belonging through volunteering in urban contexts of super-diversity.

[Link to the publication.](#)



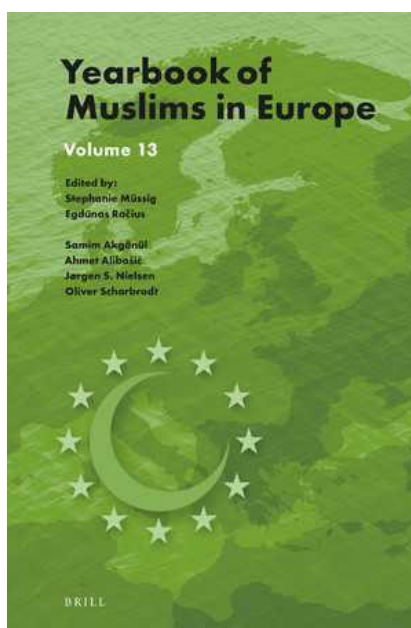
Lehner-Hartmann, Andrea / Pirker, Viera (eds.):

Religiöse Bildung - Perspektiven für die Zukunft: Interdisziplinäre Impulse für Religionspädagogik und Theologie.

Mainz: Grünewald 2021.

What is the significance of religious education in view of social changes? Which topics are underrepresented in religious education research and should be taken up more intensively in religious education studies? What do other disciplines expect from dialogue with a "special science for religious education"? Representatives of four non-theological disciplines offer their views on the following central topics: Democracy and justice, digital change and mediality, plural conceptions of identity and the increasing ageing of society. Leading religious pedagogues react to these enquiries and perspectives and think them further.

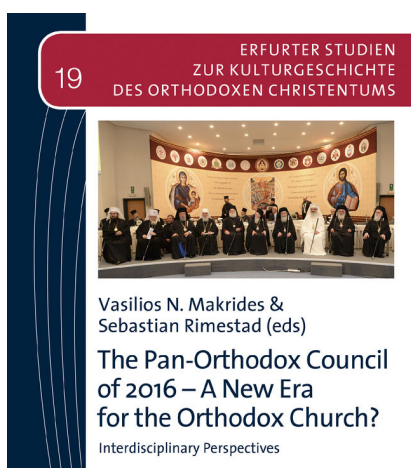
[Link to the publication.](#)



Mattes, Astrid / Bauer, Dominique: *Austria*, in: Müssig, S., Račius, E., Akgönül, S., Alibašić, A., Nielsen, J. S., & Scharbrodt, O. (eds.): *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*. Leiden: Brill 2021, pp. 28-50.

The *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe* is an essential resource for analysis of Europe's dynamic Muslim populations. Featuring up-to-date research from forty-five European countries, this comprehensive reference work summarizes significant activities, trends, and developments. Each new volume reports on the most current information available from surveyed countries, offering an annual overview of statistical and demographic data, topical issues of public debate, shifting transnational networks, change to domestic and legal policies, and major activities in Muslim organisations and institutions.

[Link to the publication.](#)



Synek, Eva: *Local Orthodoxies and Universal Orthodoxy: Perspectives from Canon Law*. In: Vasilios N. Makrides / Sebastian Rimestad (eds.): *The Pan-Orthodox Council of 2016 – A New Era for the Orthodox Church?* (Erfurter Studien zur Kulturgeschichte des orthodoxen Christentums 19), Berlin: Peter Lang 2021, pp. 57-78.

The present volume, based on a related conference in Erfurt, offers interdisciplinary insights on the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church or the



Pan-Orthodox Council, convened on the island of Crete in June 2016. Although some Orthodox Churches finally declined to participate – the most prominent being the Russian one –, the Council was a most significant development.

[Link to the publication.](#)

[Discover more publications by our members](#)

RESEARCH

Ugo Dessi & Lukas Pokorny:
FWF project “Glocal Buddhas: Exploring the Interplay of East Asian Buddhism and Globalization in Austria and Italy”

This research project explores how religions adapt themselves to our societies while they are becoming more and more globalized. In particular, we are interested in a broad range of questions, including the following: How and why do religions spread internationally and reach distant places and cultures? Have the interactions between different religions changed significantly in global society? What is the attitude religions have towards global science and the market economy? What do religions think about globally popular ideas like ecology and human rights? What are the reasons for which religions choose one option instead of another when they deal with such dilemmas, and can be more or less tolerant, more or less dogmatic, and more or less interested in the environmental crisis? Do they wish to become more global to acquire more power? Or do they wish to become more global because they find some common points between their own traditions and certain aspects of global culture?

In order to clarify these questions, we will explore how East Asian Buddhism is interacting with the European context in two neighboring countries, Austria and Italy. We will especially focus on Zen, Soka Gakkai International, and Chan Buddhism, three forms of East Asian Buddhism that are popular in both countries. Through these two specific case studies we aim to show that the dynamics of religious globalization can be interrelated to one another, and that it is possible to explain them through a comprehensive and integrated approach. Moreover, new and more detailed information about East Asian Buddhism in Austria and Italy from the perspective of globalization can contribute to a deeper understanding of the issue of religious pluralism in the EU area.

Sergio Massironi:
Dissertation “The Theological Relevance of a Pastoral Paradigm: Pope Francis after the Second Vatican Council”

The research project aims at deepening the “pastoral” paradigm introduced by Pope Francis in continuity with the Second Vatican Council, in order to make its fundamental theological profile more explicit. The elements of renewal present in the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* and then in the encyclicals *Laudato si’* and *Fratelli tutti*, in fact, reveal a different balance in the relationship between revelation and ecclesial mission. It is in particular the existential peripheries, often within increasingly vast and complex urban realities, that become true theological places in which the Church can become more of itself thanks to human events that give back to the biblical God the word and to Revelation the energy of liberation that is proper to it.

The working hypothesis is that in a non-noisy way and behind a language that eschews definition, a new awareness of the relationship between faith and social transformation is making its way into the magisterium of Pope Francis, hence the link between the eschatological and the historical, with a more radical assumption of the logic of the incarnation. If this were so, we would be faced with a new opening of the relationship between the Christological event and culture, very valuable in overcoming the aporias that

previous models have shown in relation to the demands of modernity and a world now plural, democratic, multicultural, hyper-connected.

4 FULLY-FUNDED PHD POSITIONS

The [Vienna Doctoral School of Theology and Research on Religion VDTR](#), a structured PhD programme offered jointly by the Faculty of Protestant Theology, the Faculty of Catholic Theology and the Research Centre "Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society RaT", is looking to fill four university assistant positions (*prae-doc*) as of 01 April 2022.

The VDTR combines a wide range of theological and non-theological disciplines, methods and approaches in research on religion within one doctoral school. Our PhD students are part of a vibrant interdisciplinary network of researchers and are offered options for debate and networking across disciplinary boundaries from the start of their PhD studies while working for a disciplinary degree. **The deadline for applications is January 16th, 2022.**

[Link to job advertisement and application procedure.](#)

(ONLINE) EVENTS

UPCOMING EVENTS

POETIKDOZENTUR

Karl-Heinz Ott: Hölderlin-Vorlesung

7 December 2021, 7 pm

Zoom link can be accessed [here](#).

For more information on the programme please click [here](#).

WORKSHOP: MEDIEN – ERINNERUNG – AFFEKTE

Dimensionen einer Theologie der Kultur

10 – 11 December 2021

Venue: Faculty of Protestant Theology

The programme can be found [here](#).

GAIN Gender & Agency Lecture with Dietlind Hüchtler and awarding of the GAIN Gender & Agency Research Prizes 2021

16 December 2021, 6 pm

Venue: Online via Zoom (link will be published soon)

The programme can be found [here](#).

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: PARTING OF THE WAYS

The Variegated Ways of Separation between Jews and Christians and its Consequences for Modern Jewish-Christian Dialogue.

6 – 9 February 2022

The conference is convened by Markus Tiwald (KTF) and Markus Öhler (ETF) and financed by RaT. It forms part of the RaT cluster "Transformations of Jewish and Christian Identities in the Past and Present". The proceedings of the conference will be published in the Open Access Journal JRAT.

Venue: Dekanatssitzungssaal KTF and Schenkenstraße

Registration: Please send an email to bibelwissenschaft@univie.ac.at.

(There is no participation fee, registrations are possible until 21 January 2022)

The programme can be found [here](#).

PAUL TILlich IN DRESDEN. INTELLEKTUELLEN-DISKURSE IN DER WEIMARER REPUBLIK.

Congress of the German Paul Tillich Society

6 – 9 July 2022

Venue: Tillich Building of the Dresden University of Technology

From the winter term of 1925/26 to the end of the winter term of 1928/29, Paul Tillich taught at the Cultural Studies Department of the Technical University of Dresden as Professor of Religious Studies. In Dresden, not only fundamental works such as "Die religiöse Lage der Gegenwart" (1926), "Das Dämonische. Ein Beitrag zur Sinndeutung der Geschichte" (1926) and the two Kairos volumes (1926 and 1929) were written, also his Dogmatics, which he had already begun in Marburg, was further elaborated here.

The Paul Tillich Congress in Dresden is dedicated to the theologian's dense intellectual networks against the background of the struggles for interpretive sovereignty over the Weimar Republic.

The programme can be found [here](#).

PAST EVENTS

Kick-Off event of the VDTR

(Vienna Doctoral School of Theology and Research on Religion)

11 November 2021

The official kick-off event of the Vienna Doctoral School of Theology and Research on Religion took place in the Sky Lounge. The event was celebrated with a varied programme:

In his address, Vice Rector Prof. Dr. Jean-Robert Tyran praised the VDTR as a "beacon" among the Vienna Doctoral Schools. In this context, he emphasised the strong value of the RaT research platform for interdisciplinary research, which is also part of the VDTR. In his address, Director Prof. Dr. Markus Tiwald provided insights into the developments to date and the vision of the VDTR. In her keynote lecture, Prof. Jodi Magness emphasised that the fundamental value of religious freedom must necessarily go hand in hand with the promotion of religious education.

In the panel discussion, both professors and doctoral students gave personal insights into their motivation to research in the field of theology and religious studies. At the buffet dinner, the participants got into conversation with each other.

More information can be found [here](#).

THIRD MISSION ACTIVITIES

RaT members contribute to public discourse by writing in newspapers, giving statements in television and podcasts, and by publishing on our blog. These are two of our most recent blog entries:

RAT BLOG

"In front of this image, some may lose their faith."

In this [contribution](#), Jan-Heiner Tück takes the 200th anniversary of Fyodor Dostoevsky's birth as an opportunity to reflect on Hans Holbein's painting "The Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb", which also left deep traces in the work of the famous Russian writer.

"For some central prayers one must have a public, a quorum of ten grown up Jews, to actually say them. In times of social distancing, this becomes a real problem, with numerous halachic (Jewish legal) questions arising [...]"

How have the recent COVID-19 related lockdowns affected Jewish religious practice? [Yuval Katz-Wilfing's text](#) reflects upon the challenges that the pandemic poses to Jewish laws regarding prayers and rituals and gives an insight into the various ways different Jewish communities have responded to these difficult times.

PRESS FEATURES

Falter

Stefan Hammer

In this interview titled ["Freedom of communication for religions"](#), legal philosopher Stefan Hammer reflects on the cross in the classroom and religious freedom.

The legal podcast of Verlag Österreich

Elisabeth Holzeithner

In [episode #2](#) of the podcast, titled "Fundamental Rights. An introduction: Where law lives", numerous experts explain what is really meant when talking about fundamental rights.

DerStandard

Michael Hunklinger & Katharina Limacher

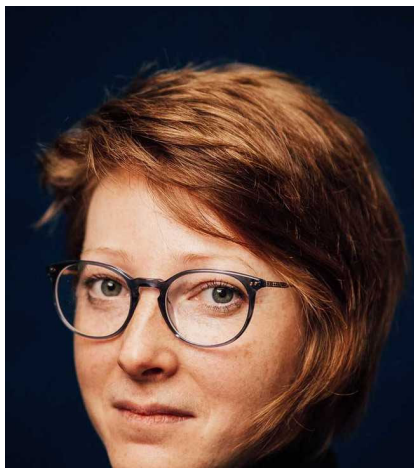
["Abort the Court: The new fight for the right to abortion"](#) is an article on the culture war over abortion in the USA which becomes increasingly intense.

Salzburger Nachrichten

Rüdiger Lohlker

As a leading international jihadism expert and researcher at the University of Vienna, Rüdiger Lohlker explains in [this interview](#) with SN how the global jihadist scene reacted to the Vienna attack and what is going wrong in the fight against terror.

NEW RAT MEMBER



WELCOME TO RAT, KATERINA KOCI!

Katerina Koci is a post-doctoral researcher at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna, Austria, and a laureate of the Lise Meitner Fellowship funded by Austrian Science Fund (FWF) for the project entitled Woman without a Name: Gender Identity in Sacrificial Stories (M2947-G). After defending her doctoral dissertation from KU Leuven, Belgium in 2017, Katerina held a fellowship at Charles University, Prague. Katerina is the author of *The Land without Promise: The Roots and Afterlife of One Biblical Allusion* (T&T Clark, 2021). She lives with her husband, a fellow theologian/philosopher, Martin, and



two small kids in Vienna.

Her research focus encompasses biblical, feminist and philosophical-theological hermeneutics, afterlife of biblical motifs in Christian culture, existentialism and phenomenology of sacrificial experience. Her intellectual sources are Hans-Georg Gadamer, Søren Kierkegaard, Jan Patočka, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva and Sarah Coakley. Her research topics are sacrifice, specifically sacrifice of women, feminine and post-colonial aspects of the promised land as perceived in Western culture.

Impressum

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