



RaT-Newsletter



Dear members and friends of RaT,

Nature slowly awakens from hibernation and the summer term is about to start - and with it we all hope that our daily lives will soon find back to their habitual ways as well.

The research centre and its members, however, have not been hibernating quite as much. With this newsletter, we would thus like to inform you about recent publications, current research projects and upcoming events by RaT members.

Although we look forward to soon being able to meet again in person, we are proud to say that meanwhile we are mastering hosting all kinds of events online. One such example was our symposium in early February where RaT members from various disciplines discussed their views on and inputs to the notion of religion.

Last but not least, we would like to invite you to read our most recent [blog entries](#) where we discuss societal issues and present topics that currently influence the work of our members.

We hope you enjoy reading our newsletter and wish you a good start

into the new term!

Lisa Achathaler, Kurt Appel, Hannah Bleckenwegner, Jakob Deibl, Marlene Deibl, Martin Eleven, Daniel Kuran, Anna Rosa Schlechter, Katharina Limacher, Marian Weingartshofer, Margareta Wetchy.

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

RAT INTERDISCIPLINARY WORKSHOP

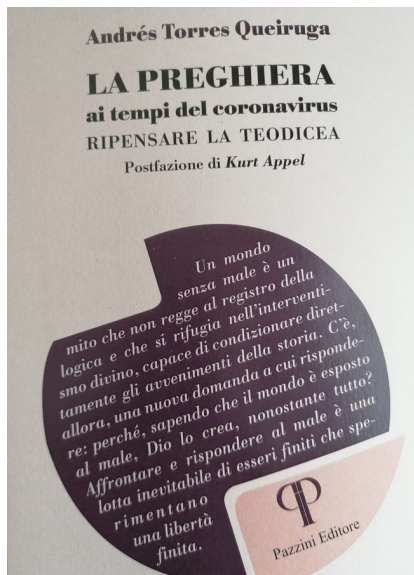
On **February 2, 2021**, an **interdisciplinary online workshop**, organised by the RAT team, took place. In this workshop, members of the Research Centre discussed **current questions about and approaches to the concept of religion** from different disciplinary perspectives.

The nine talks covered a broad range of research fields including religious studies (**Gerald Hödl's** presentation on "The concept of Religion in Religious Studies" focused on giving an overview of the different approaches to religion in his field; **Karsten Lehmann** introduced us to a multi-layer-model of religion which aims at fostering a better mutual understanding of different approaches to religion; **Astrid Mattes** talked about her experience with the different meanings assigned to religion in empirical research), philosophy of religion (**Hans Schelkshorn** talked about the importance of Karl Jaspers' concept of the Axial age), law (**Andreas Kowatsch** and **Stefan Hammer** gave insights into the complex legal relations between religious communities and the state and its historical development) and Jewish studies (**Gerhard Langer's** talk "The Concept of Religion from the Point of View of the Jewish Tradition" dealt with the subtleties of Jewish concepts and their relation to the religious practice of Judaism).

Discussions focused, among other things, on whether a concept of religion should include only people or groups who identify themselves as being religious, as **Christian Danz** (who presented a model of "Religion as Communication") and **Ingeborg Gabriel** (who called into question Erich Voegelins concept of political religion for using the term religion to describe movements that don't self-identify as being religious) argued, or needs to be, as Hödl and Mattes saw it, constructed to avoid confusing the point of view of the researcher with that of his object. Thank you to all participants for this unique and entertaining workshop!

You can now read **Marian Weingartshofer's** review of the workshop on [the RaT Blog](#).

PUBLICATIONS



Appel, Kurt: "Il problema attuale della teodicea". In: "La preghiera ai tempi del coronavirus: ripensare la teodicea": Postfazione di Kurt Appel, a cura di Marco Dal Corso e Francesco Strazzari. Traduzione dallo spagnolo e dal tedesco a cura di Francesco Strazzari e Antonio Dall'Osto. Villa Verucchio (RN): Pazzini, 2020, p. 67-79.

In the rich philosophical and theological literature "provoked" by the globalised experience of the virus health emergency, the text by the theologian Andrés Torres Queiruga rightly belongs. If there is no solution to the mystery of the existence of evil, one answer is, however, clearly meaningless: the one that leads it back to God. If we do not want to remain imprisoned in Epicurus' paradox - if God does not want to prevent evil, he is not good; if he cannot, he is not omnipotent - we must necessarily change perspective. This is what Queiruga's text intends to do.

[Link to the publication.](#)



Appel, Kurt/Deibl, Jakob: "Hegel, Hölderlin e l'apertura della Gottesfrage". *estetica. studi e ricerche* 2/2020, pp. 439-478.

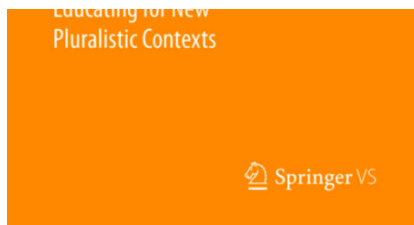
Interpreting selected key passages of Hegel's "Phenomenology of Spirit" and Hölderlin's poems "Patmos" and "Bread and Wine", this essay points out a specific conformance in thinking of both coevals. Both connect the question of God with the search for the "Open" – not expressible in conventional propositional language. On this threshold of what is conceivable and speakable, Hegel develops the dialectical method of his speculative philosophy, whereas Hölderlin develops his philosophical poetry of the hymns and elegies after 1800. Both Hegel and Hölderlin become aware of a rupture within the Absolute that refers to an absolute openness which is the other of any concluding representation. The "Open" which is connected with the index "God" requires an exercitium of theoretical, practical and aesthetic (opening up of new horizons of nature).

[Link to the publication.](#)



Aslan, Ednan/Hermansen, Marcia (eds.): "Religious Diversity at School: Educating for New Pluralistic Contexts". Springer, 2021.

This volume features chapters by international experts in education, sociology, and theology who consider a range of challenges faced by educators in primary and secondary schools that are becoming increasingly diverse in terms of the ethnic and



religious backgrounds of pupils. From the non-religious, to the refugee, to student fundamentalism and even radicalization—these multiple, fresh approaches analyze the dynamics of the changing pedagogical landscape in an age of ever increasing globalization and cultural plurality.

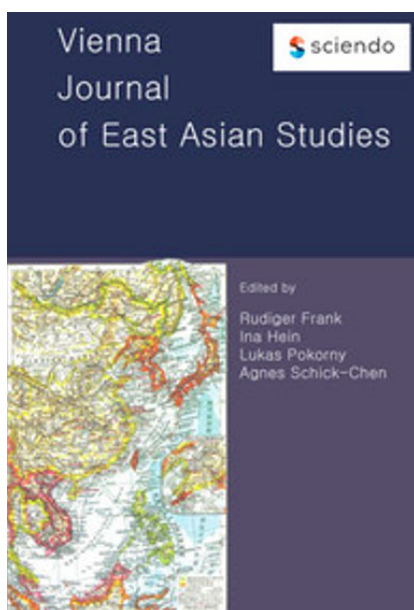
[Link to the publication.](#)



Danz, Christian (ed.): "Schellings Gottheiten von Samothrake im Kontext". Vandenhoeck-Ruprecht Verlage: Göttingen, 2021.

The contributions in the volume deal for the first time with Friedrich W. J. Schelling's Munich Academy Lecture »Über die Gottheiten von Samothrake« (1815) in its problem- and contemporary historical context, thus shedding new light on its philosophical development between 1812 and 1817. The study includes Schelling's journal project »Allgemeine Zeitschrift von Deutschen für Deutsche« from 1813 as well as the »Bericht über die Aeginetischen Bildwerke« by Johann Martin Wagner, which he published in 1817. In this way, Schelling's smaller writings provide a picture of his work in his early Munich period that has received little attention so far.

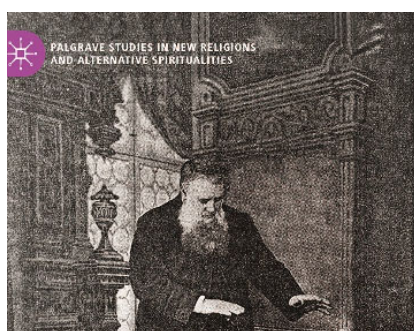
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Pokorny, Lukas/Frank, Rüdiger/Hein, Ina/Schick-Chen, Agnes (eds.): Vienna Journal of East Asian Studies, Volume 12.

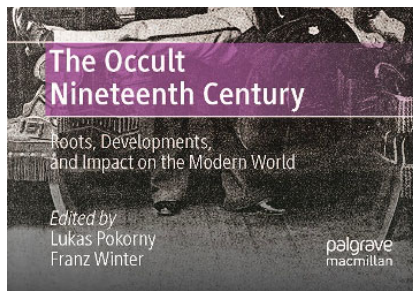
What commenced in 2009 with the chief aim to provide a platform to disseminate pioneering research especially by emerging scholars of the University of Vienna, over the years became an increasingly attractive venue for the scholarship of the international East Asianist community. With its move to De Gruyter Open starting with Volume 10, the *Vienna Journal of East Asian Studies* (VJEAS), while still embracing the early philosophy at its core, has internationalised its profile. With Lukas Pokorny as chief editor, VJEAS keeps publishing in particular scholarship at the intersection of East Asian Studies and Religious Studies. Volume 12 includes contributions on Japanese Naikan as well as on Religion and Children in Rural China.

[Link to the publication.](#)



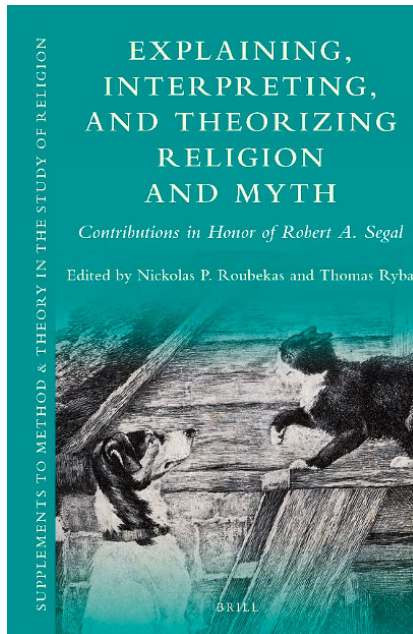
Pokorny, Lukas/Winter, Franz (eds.): "The Occult Nineteenth Century: Roots, Developments, and Impact on the Modern World". Palgrave Mcmillan, 2021.

The nineteenth century witnessed a proliferation of alternative religious currents and practices, appropriating earlier traditions, entangling geographically distinct spiritual discourses, and



crafting a repository of mindscapes eminently suitable to be accommodated by later generations of thinkers and practitioners. Penned by specialists in the field, this volume examines important themes and figures pertaining to this occult amalgam and its resonance into the twentieth century and beyond.

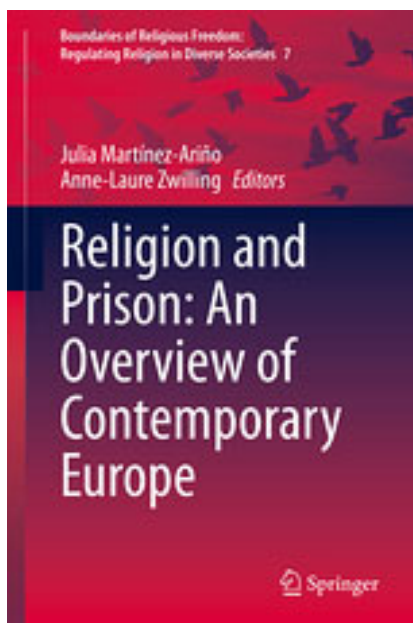
[Link to the publication.](#)



Pokorny, Lukas: "The Millenarian Myth Ethnocentrized: The Case of East Asian New Religious Movements". In: Nickolas P. Roubekas und Thomas Ryba (eds.), "Explaining, Interpreting, and Theorizing Religion and Myth". Contributions in Honor of Robert A. Segal. Brill, 2020.

In *Explaining, Interpreting, and Theorizing Religion and Myth: Contributions in Honor of Robert A. Segal*, nineteen renowned scholars offer a collection of essays addressing the persisting question of how to approach religion and myth as academic categories. Taking their cue from the work of Robert A. Segal, they discuss how to theorize about religion and myth from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. With cases from ancient Greece and Mesopotamia to East Asia and the modern world by and large, and engaging with diverse disciplines such as psychology, philosophy, anthropology, history, film, theology, and religious studies among others, the volume establishes a synthesis that demonstrates the pervasiveness as well as the pitfalls of the categories "religion" and "myth" in the world.

[Link to the publication.](#)



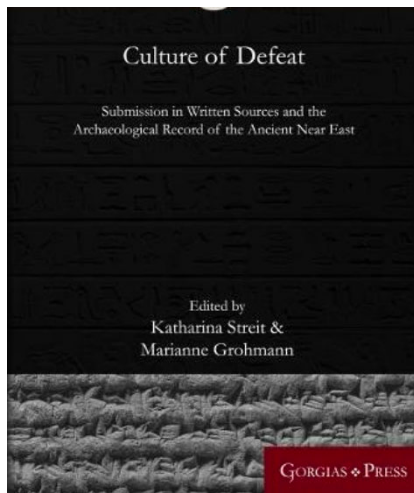
Reiss, Wolfram: "Austria: Management of Religious Diversity in Prisons". In: Zwillung, Anne-Laure/Martínez-Ariño, Julia (eds.), "Religion and Prison. An Overview of Contemporary Europe", Springer 2020 (= Boundaries of Religious Freedom: Regulating Religion in Diverse Societies 7), pp. 11-35.

The management of religious diversity in correctional services in Austria is currently in the process of a complete overhaul and reorganisation. This chapter displays the current efforts as well as the first results of the development of a new national strategy concerning the management of religious diversity and prison chaplaincy within correctional services in Austria.

[Link to the publication.](#)



Streit, Katharina/Grohmann, Marianne (eds.): "Culture of Defeat. Submission in Written Sources and the Archaeological



Record". Proceedings of a Joint Seminar of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the University of Vienna, October 2017 (Gorgias Studies in the Ancient Near East 16). Piscataway, 2020.

"Culture of Defeat" is based on a 2017 conference focusing on the impact on, and responses by, the defeated parties in conflicts in the ancient Near East. Shifting the focus of analysis from the conqueror to the vanquished, the (re-)examination of written sources and the archaeological record sheds new light on the consequences and reactions after often traumatic defeats and allows to gain a more nuanced and complete picture of such events. Researchers in the fields of Near Eastern archaeology, biblical exegesis and Assyriology analyse cultural reactions processing defeat from the late Bronze and Iron Age Near East to the Neo-Babylonian period. Seven of these contributions, as well as four invited papers, are presented here in an expanded and updated form.

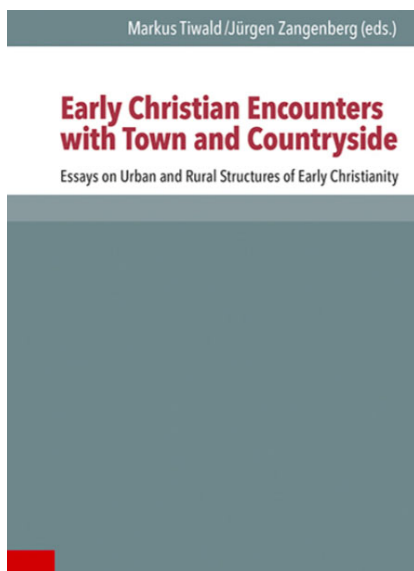
[Link to the publication.](#)



Synek, Eva: "Wären wir wahre Christen, würden wir alle den Stern tragen". In: Daniel Munteanu (ed.), "Ökumene ist keine Häresie". Theologische Beiträge zu einer ökumenischen Kultur. Paderborn: Brill 2021, pp. 405-421.

The sentence "Ecumenism is no heresy" was coined by S.E. Metropolit Dr.h.c. Augoustinos von Deutschland. This expression is seen and honored as a paradigmatic programme of the Orthodox - the ecumenic - theology of the 21st century. The book is divided into the following topics: Ecumenic social ethics and public theology as paradigms of ecumenic theology, ecumenism of spirituality, and ecumenism of interreligious dialogue and ecumenic mission theology.

[Link to the publication.](#)



Tiwald, Markus/Zangenberg, Jürgen (eds.): "Early Christian Encounters with Town and Countryside: Essays on Urban and Rural Structures of Early Christianity". Vandenhoeck-Ruprecht Verlage, 2021.

Ever since Jesus walked the hills of Galilee and Paul travelled the roads of Asia Minor and Greece, Christianity has shown a remarkable ability to adapt itself to various social and cultural environments. Recent research has demonstrated that these environments can only be very insufficiently termed as "rural" or "urban". Neither was Jesus' Galilee only rural, nor Paul's Asia only "urban". On the background of ongoing research on the diversity of

social environments in the Early Empire, this volume will focus on various early Christian "worlds" as witnessed in canonical and non-canonical texts.

[Link to the publication.](#)

[Discover more publications by our members](#)

RESEARCH

PUBLISHED DISSERTATION



Raheb, Viola: "Die syrischen Schulbücher unter der Baath-Partei und in den politischen Umbrüchen", in: W. Reiss (ed.), Religiös-gesellschaftliche Diversität in Schulbüchern islamisch geprägter Länder, Teil I Syrien, Band 33. EBV: Berlin.

[Link to the publication.](#)

(ONLINE) EVENTS

UPCOMING EVENTS

Continuity and Topicality of Antisemitism - an Austrian and Global Challenge

On March 4, 2021, 4pm-6pm, an impulse presentation and panel talk with several researchers and members of the Jewish religious community will be held as an online event. Regina Polak, who is a member of RaT, will host the first event of this event series which is titled "To the Continuity of Antisemitism. From the Vienna Gesera 1421 up until the Present". A second event will take place on April 28, 2021, 4pm-6pm, which will focus on experiences and challenges of Austrian commemorative culture. Further information on the events can be found [here](#).

200 Years Faculty of Protestant Theology

Under the title "The Future of Theology - Theology of the Future: At the University, in Church, for Society", the Faculty of Protestant Theology of the University of Vienna will celebrate its 200th

anniversary. Several events will take place in 2021 that we will inform you about throughout the year. The first event is a presentation series by alumni who will introduce areas of practice of theology. The series with the title "Experiences from Church, School, Diaconia, Economy and Further Contexts" will start on March 8, 2021, at 7:30pm, at the ETF in Schenkenstraße 8-10. The full programme can be accessed [here](#).

Presentation and Talk - "How much religion does a pluralistic society need"?

On March 26, 2021, at 6pm, Prof. Ulrich Körtner from the Faculty of Protestant Theology at the University of Vienna discusses the topic in an online presentation hosted by Prof. Ednan Aslan from the Department of Islamic-Theological Studies. The presentation can be watched via [this link](#). Meeting-ID: 812 5341 6354 // Code: N1MyLJ. For more information, visit [this website](#).

Annual Conference on Paul Tillich

The annual conference on "Paul Tillich and the dialectics of enlightenment. Discourses in theology and society", co-organized by Prof. Christian Danz, will take place on April 9-11, 2021, at the Evangelische Akademie Frankfurt am Main and online. For further details on the conference, visit [this website](#). The yearly congress by the Paul-Tillich-Society will take place in July 2021. More information on the congress can be found [here](#).

PAST EVENT AVAILABLE ON YOUTUBE

Online Presentation

Prof. Elisabeth Holzleithner spoke about "Intersectionality in law. History, crises, perspectives" in the lecture series "Intersectionality in the crossfire" by the Cornelia Goethe Colloquium. The presentation can still be watched on youtube by clicking [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

LEGO ® meets Bestattungsmuseum Wien

Katharina Limacher, Marlene Deibl, Lisa Achathaler, Margareta Wetchy, Daniel Kuran and Hannah Bleckenwegner write about the LEGO ® collection sold on the website of the Bestattungsmuseum Wien and attempt to scientifically (and humoristically) analyse the purpose of the LEGO ® selfie coffin, the crematorium oven and the

funeral car. The blog entries can be read [here](#).

Reflecting on the storming of the capitol

Andreas Telser (KU Linz), whose research is closely connected to RaT, reflects on the events of Jan 6, 2021, in an attempt to understand what social and religio-political circumstances and developments might have led to the storming and that have caused the deep division of the US society years ago. The blog entry can be read [here](#).

LEARN MORE

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN ACADEMY ON RELIGION AND SOCIETY

RaT recently started to publish blog entries and journal articles via the dashboard of the European Academy on Religion and Society (EARS). EARS is a European network of faculties related to theology and religious studies and has the goal of analysing current social developments and questions from the perspective of religious studies/theology and of presenting it to a larger audience. Visit the [website of EARS](#) for more insights and further information on the academy.

PRESS FEATURES

Articles on *YouBeOn*

Several newspaper sites reported about the kick-off event of the research project YouBeON that took place in January: [orf.at](#), [kathpress.at](#), [evang.at](#), [Erzdiözese Wien](#) as well as [katholisch.de](#). Astrid Mattes, project leader of YouBeOn, talks about her research on [Studio Omega-Podcast](#) as well as in public broadcast [Deutschlandfunk](#).

Article in "Die Presse"

Elisabeth Holzleithner recently spoke about "Why the constitution lacks dignity" in an interview with Die Presse. The full article can be read [here](#).

LECTURES AND COURSE DIRECTORY SUMMER 2021

The list of lectures and seminars offered by members of RaT in the upcoming summer semesters 2021 has just been published on our website. You can access the current list of courses [here](#).

WELCOME TO THE TEAM, HANNAH!

We are more than happy to announce that Hannah Bleckenwegner has recently joined our team! After her Bachelor's Degree in

Transcultural Communication with a focus on English and French and her Master's Degree in International Relations in the UK, Hannah worked in education management before joining RaT in January 2021. She enjoys doing sports in nature, but is equally fascinated by the human psyche - an interest she pursues in her psychotherapeutic remedial course.

We wish Hannah a great start in her new position!

NEW RAT MEMBERS

WELCOME TO RAT, UGO DESSI!

PD Dr. Ugo Dessì is OeNB Professorial Fellow at the Department of Religious Studies, University of Vienna. His main area of research is religion under globalisation and Japanese religions. He has published widely on these topics, including "The Global Repositioning of Japanese Religions: An Integrated Approach" (Routledge 2017) and "Religioni e globalizzazione. Un'introduzione" (Carocci 2019).

We are happy to have Ugo Dessi as a new member of RaT!



WELCOME TO RAT, MARKUS TIWALD!

Markus Tiwald is Professor of New Testament Studies at the Faculty of Catholic Theology. His research interests include the beginnings of Christianity, early Jewish-Christian encounters and the dialogue between Jews and Christians. He has published widely on these topics, most recently "Das Frühjudentum und die Anfänge des Christentums: Ein Studienbuch" (2016) and "The Sayings Source: A Commentary on Q" (2020), both published by Kohlhammer.

We are happy to have Markus Tiwald as a new member of RaT!

Impressum

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