



RaT-Newsletter



Dear members and friends of RaT,

The new academic year has just begun, and with it comes a fresh RaT newsletter. This edition focuses on several internal news:

First and foremost, we are delighted to welcome four new members to our centre, who bring a wide range of interdisciplinary perspectives: We are pleased to welcome **Alfred Dunshirn**, **Ana Mijic**, **Eva Puschautz**, and **Susanne Schwarz** to RaT, whose backgrounds and research focuses are introduced in this newsletter. However, the new academic year also marks a time of farewell: This fall, two longstanding members of our centre, **Ednan Aslan** and **Hans Schelkshorn**, are entering retirement. This provides a fitting occasion to honor their contributions. We wish them all the best for the next chapter of their lives!

With respect to the center's own publication series, the summer has been an exceptionally productive time. In this newsletter edition, we are excited to present **three new volumes in our RaT series** (Volume 36: *Being Human in Times of Transformation*; Volume 37: *Neutral State?*; Volume 38: *Religious and Non-Religious Narratives on Migration*) as well as **the fourth volume of the JRAT Supplementa series**, featuring the English translation of a monograph by the renowned Italian theologian Pierangelo Sequeri (*Human. A Reality Put to the Test*). More details on all volumes can be found below.

Aside from these updates, our newsletter once again offers a wide range of exciting content: From new book publications (by **Markus Öhler**, **Milja Radovic**, and **Jan-Heiner Tück**) to news from the VDTR, as well as announcements of upcoming events covering topics such as the relationship between Judaism and Islam, the role of church holidays in an increasingly secular society, reflections on philosophical modernity, and the question of

the good life.

Kurt Appel, Noemi Call, Jakob Deibl, Sofiiia-Olga Kungurtseva, Daniel Kuran, Magdalena Lorenz, Astrid Mattes, Andreas Telser, and Marian Weingartshofer

PS: Please consider forwarding our newsletter to those interested in the topics we work on! If you are not subscribed yet, just click [here](#).

To download a pdf.-version of this newsletter, [click here](#).

NEW MEMBERS: Welcome to RaT!



Mag. Dr. Alfred Dunshirn, Privatdoz.

*Faculty of Philological and Cultural Studies
Department of Classical Philology, Medieval and
Neolatin Studies*

My name is Alfred Dunshirn (born in 1977 in St. Pölten, Austria), I studied Greek, Latin, and philosophy at the Universities of Vienna and Marburg an der Lahn. I received my doctorate from the University of Vienna in 2004 with a thesis on Hegel's examination of Homer's "Iliad," and my habilitation was on the topic of "*Logos in Plato as Play and Event*" (Würzburg 2010). I am a senior lecturer at the Department of Classical Philology, Medieval and Modern Latin, and at the Department of Philosophy at the University of Vienna. My research and interests focus on ancient philosophy, ancient religious and cultural history, and the reception of Greek literature in modern philosophy.

In addition to publications on ancient philosophy and the reception history of classical literature, I have produced several interlinear translations of Plato's dialogues. My study book *Greek for Philosophy Studies* (3rd edition published in 2022) and a short introductory volume on Aristotle (2nd edition 2025) are aimed at a broader audience.

To learn more about Alfred Dunshirn's research, [visit his profile on our website](#).



Ass.-Prof. Dr. Ana MIJIC, M.A.

*Faculty of Social Sciences
Department of Sociology*

I am currently a tenure-track professor for qualitative social research at the Department of Sociology at the University of Vienna. In my research, I combine sociology of knowledge with questions of identity formation in times of crisis, particularly in the context of war and (forced) migration. I studied sociology and political science (peace and conflict studies) at the University of Tübingen and worked at the Berghof Foundation from 2005–2007. Subsequently, I completed my doctorate at the University of Vienna (2007–2013), focusing on post-war transformations of identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I was a fellow at the IFK Vienna (2011/12) and at the

Trinity Long Room Hub in Dublin (2012/13), as well as a guest professor in the Nationalism Studies Program at CEU (2022–2025). From 2015–2021, I led the FWF-funded project [Postwar Diaspora\(s\)](#) and was the co-principal investigator for [The Art of Arriving – Reframing Refugee Integration](#) (2021–2023). Starting in spring 2025, I have been working [with my team](#) on my new project, [Creating Identity out of War and Migration](#).

To learn more about Ana Mijic's research, [visit her profile on our website](#).



Mag. Dr. Eva Puschautz
*Faculty of Catholic Theology
Department of Biblical Studies*

My Name is Eva Puschautz and I am a University Assistant (Postdoctoral Researcher) at the Department of Biblical Studies at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Vienna, with a focus on New Testament exegesis. My research engages with New Testament texts, particularly through the lens of historical-critical methods and feminist hermeneutics. Some of my main interests lie in the analysis of power dynamics, gender constructions, and interpretive practices in biblical texts—as well as their reception in ecclesial and societal contexts. In this, my work combines foundational theological research with contemporary discourses in gender studies, ethics, and science communication.

In addition to my research and public speaking activities, I teach at the University of Vienna and as part of the “Theologische Kurse” adult education program of the Austrian Bishops’ Conference and the Archdiocese of Vienna. I am also actively involved in public theology, offering lectures for parishes and educational institutions and contributing to various media formats as a theological commentator.

To learn more about Eva Puschautz's research, [visit her profile on our website](#).



Univ.-Prof. Dr. Susanne Schwarz
*Faculty of Protestant Theology
Department of Religious Education
Department for Teacher Education*

My name is Susanne Schwarz, and since March 1, 2025, I have had the privilege of holding the position of Professor of Protestant Religious Education at the University of Vienna. At present, I am working together with colleagues on the publication of a four-volume study that explores the relationship of children from diverse (non-)religious backgrounds to religion. This project exemplifies one of my central research interests: the investigation and interpretation of the perspectives of recipients of religious and religion-related educational practices, as well as the derivation of educational implications.

Further areas of research include, among others, ambiguity and religious education, sexual education, content questions of religious education, and the phenomenon of loneliness. I look forward to contributing to RAT and to engaging in interdisciplinary exchange in order to interpret ongoing transformation processes of religion and religious as well as religion-related education in order to help shape them.

To learn more about Susanne Schwarz's research, [visit her profile on our website](#).

RETIREMENTS: Thank You and Farewell!



Retirement of Univ.-Prof. Dr. Ednan Aslan, MA

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Ednan Aslan has shaped the development and establishment of Islamic Religious Education in Austria and throughout the German-speaking world like few others. As the first professor of this field at the University of Vienna, he founded the Institute for Islamic Religious Education, thus laying the foundation for the academic anchoring of Islamic theological education in Europe.

For many years, Prof. Aslan has contributed significantly to the scientific discourse and public debate on Islam with great dedication, foresight, and perseverance. His interdisciplinary research, his courage to address socially relevant issues openly, and his ability to build bridges between science, religion, and society have set standards and inspired generations of students.

Particularly noteworthy is his contribution to the study of Islamic Religious Education in Europe. Through numerous third-party-funded projects, he has addressed questions regarding religious education, the socialization of Muslim children, and the role of religion in pluralistic societies. His work on topics such as Islamist radicalization, antisemitism, and religious identity formation has gained recognition far beyond Austria.

For his tireless commitment to fostering a European-oriented Islam and promoting peaceful coexistence in a diverse society, Prof. Aslan has been awarded the Grand Decoration of Honour in Silver (Großes Silbernes Ehrenzeichen) of the Republic of Austria. In addition, he successfully built a far-reaching international network and sustainably strengthened the reputation of Islamic theological research.

With his scholarly passion, clear stance, and unwavering dedication to dialogue and education, Prof. Aslan has left a lasting impact on the Islamic theological landscape in Europe. We sincerely thank him for his outstanding commitment, inspiring work, and the enduring contributions he has made to

research, teaching, and society. As part of his work for RaT, he has served as editor of the following publication:

- **RaT Series Volume 3:** Martin Rothgangel (ed.), Ednan Aslan (ed.), and Martin Jäggle (ed.): [Religion und Gemeinschaft. Die Frage der Integration aus christlicher und muslimischer Perspektive.](#)



Retirement of Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Dr. Johann Schelkshorn

Hans Schelkshorn is widely regarded as one of the leading figures in intercultural philosophy in the German-speaking world. Building on Karl-Otto Apel's discourse ethics and transcendental pragmatics, he has reinterpreted and extended their normative foundations, opening them up to intercultural perspectives. In his early work, he examined the role of dialogical thinking in the development of social ethics, engaging with the thought of Friedrich Gogarten, Emil Brunner, and Enrique Dussel and highlighting the social-critical and transformative dimensions of their approaches. He also explored the productive tension between Apel's discourse ethics and Latin American philosophies of liberation, showing how this dynamic can open up new horizons for a genuinely global political philosophy.

Through his research, Schelkshorn has played a key role in introducing Latin American philosophy to German-speaking academia, thereby laying the groundwork for a practically oriented philosophy informed by intercultural perspectives. His later writings, especially his two monographs *Entgrenzungen* and *Rethinking European Modernity*, deepen this perspective by critically interrogating the Eurocentric premises of modernity and opening the modern project toward a transmodern future. This work has found a lively reception not only in the German-speaking world but also in Latin America and the United States.

Beyond his academic work, Schelkshorn is a distinctive voice in public life. In numerous lectures, publications, and through active participation in public debates, he advocates for a rationally grounded critique of troubling political and social developments and demonstrates how philosophical reflection can provide orientation in navigating the challenges of our time.

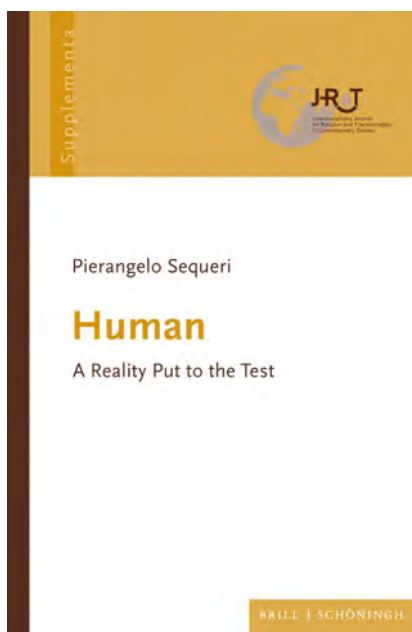
The research centre RaT extends its heartfelt gratitude to Hans Schelkshorn for his many years of dedicated membership, marked by close and fruitful collaboration. Among his numerous contributions, Schelkshorn has played a key role as both editor and author in several RaT publications, including the following:

- **JRAT Supplementa Series Volume 3:** Hans

Schelkshorn (ed.), and Herman Westerink (ed.): [Religious Experience, Secular Reason and Politics around 1945. Sources for Rethinking Religion and Spirituality in Contemporary Societies \(Open Access\)](#)

- **JRAT 5 (1/2019)**: Hans Schelkshorn (ed.), and Herman Westerink (ed.): [Religious Experience, Secular Reason and Politics around 1900. Sources of the Contemporary Turn to Spirituality](#)
- **RaT Series Volume 12**: Hans Schelkshorn (ed.), and Herman Westerink (ed.): [Reformation\(en\) und Moderne. Philosophisch-theologische Erkundungen.](#)
- **RaT Series Volume 7**: Hans Schelkshorn (ed.), Friedrich Wolfram (ed.), and Rudolf Langthaler (ed.): [Religion in der globalen Moderne. Philosophische Erkundungen.](#)

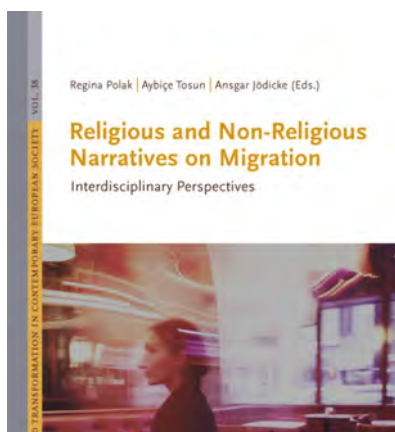
PUBLICATIONS: JRAT, JRAT Supplementa and RaT Series



JRAT Supplementa (Volume 5): **Human. A Reality Put to the Test**, by **Pierangelo Sequeri**

With Modernity, every “subject” is individual and unique but prey to contradictions. This book focuses first on Modernity’s separation of truth (is knowledge rigorously rational?) from justice (is an action ethical?). Modernity values human dignity and autonomy, but its commitment to self-realization is unsustainable and neglects the common good, which is lost in the “anonymity” of technology and economics. Lost are both truly creative individuality and productive social relationships. Sequeri then examines contradictions in our “common humanity”: the power of desire, the excesses of tragedy, modalities of cooperation, and the manifestations of diversity. Recent anthropology and psychoanalysis support his goal of renewed acceptance of (a) desire that leads to life-creating affection, and (b) otherness as a reason for existential cooperation.

[Link to the publication \(full access\).](#)



RaT Series (Volume 38): **Religious and Non-Religious Narratives on Migration. Interdisciplinary Perspectives**, edited by **Regina Polak, Aybiçe Tosun, and Ansgar Jödicke**

This volume analyzes religious and non-religious narratives on migration from an international and interdisciplinary perspective. Narratives shape the perception of migration. The recourse to religion as well as the self-understanding of religious people and religious communities play an important role in this



context. As part of the COST Action 2017 “[Connecting Theory and Practical Issues of Migration and Religious Diversity](#)”, international researchers from various disciplines – theology, social sciences, philosophy – are exploring contemporary perspectives on migration based on subject-specific understandings of the concept of “narrative” and are also discussing the role and contributions of religion. Particular attention is paid to the original voices of migrants. For this purpose, the innovative method of so-called “narrative cafés” was developed. The volume thus offers numerous insights for critical reflection on migration narratives in academic and socio-political practice.

[Link to the publication \(full access\).](#)



RaT Series (Volume 37): **Neutraler Staat? Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf die Autonomie von Religion, Kunst und Wissenschaft**, edited by **Stefan Hammer, Andreas Kowatsch, Astrid Mattes, and Jakob Helmut Deibl**

Despite their constitutional protection of autonomy, religion, art, and science are increasingly subjected to dependencies that call into question the neutrality of state policies in these areas.

The public funding that is indispensable for today's research and artistic endeavors exposes both fields to distorting demands for applicability dictated by political, societal, and economic conditions. The role of religions in state policies governing society and culture even raises the question of whether the state's religious and ideological neutrality can be realized at all. This volume offers discussions on the multifaceted problems arising from these issues, analyzed from theological, philosophical, social scientific, and legal perspectives.

[Link to the publication.](#)



RaT Series (Volume 36): **Mensch sein in Zeiten der Transformation. Interdisziplinäre Wege zu einer ethischen Anthropologie**, edited by **Sigrid Müller**

The rapid development of new technologies and the global pandemic have disrupted the way we live together, revealing significant consequences for well-being. What do people need not only to endure times of upheaval but to shape them positively? The authors explore the question of what defines humanity today in order to develop a vision of what a well-structured society must consider to remain humane and foster a good life for as many people as possible. Engaging in dialogue with philosophy and theology, they incorporate surprising perspectives: from architecture and urban planning to psychology and sociology, medicine and neuroscience, evolutionary biology, literature, and film.

Interdisciplinary Journal for
Religion and Transformation
in Contemporary Society

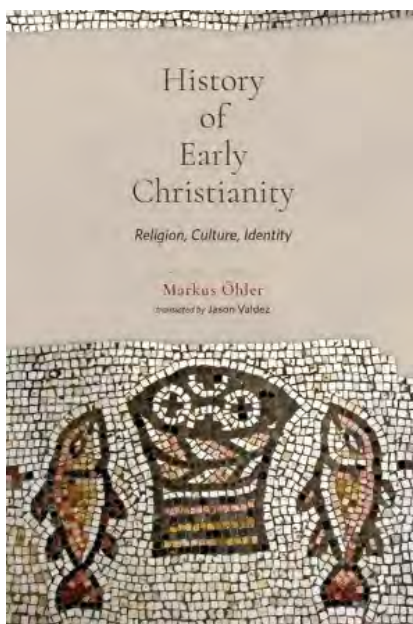


[Link to the publication.](#)

Latest articles published online in advance (all articles are published open access):

- **Fabian Völker:** [Dharmischer Diktator oder erleuchtete Kommunen? Buddhistische Herrschaftslegitimation zwischen Tradition und Innovation](#)
- **Ujjaini Chakrabarty:** [Performing the Divine's Narratives. An Exploration of the Kathāvācaka Tradition of Storytelling](#)
- **David Knibbe:** [A Medieval Perspective on the Control of Charisma. Henricus Herp's \(d. 1477\) Analysis of Grace and Visions in The Mirror of Perfection](#)
- **Sabine Grenz:** [Post-Secular Emancipatory Knowledge: Connectedness of Spiritual Experiences with Academic Knowledge in Feminists' Lived Religion](#)

PUBLICATIONS: Monographs & Anthologies



Markus Öhler: History of Early Christianity. Religion, Culture, Identity. Translated by Jason Valdez. Waco (TX): Baylor University Press 2025.

Markus Öhler's history of early Christianity from 2018 has now been published in English:

This introductory textbook on the period offers a reconstruction of the beginnings of early Christianity from the events surrounding Jesus of Nazareth to the Bar-Kokhba uprising in the year 135. It begins by orienting the reader to the methods, resources, and long-standing scholarly discussions essential for the study of early Christianity. The book proceeds chronologically through the period, covering the activities of Jesus of Nazareth and his first disciples, the spread of the Christian movement during the first century, the establishment of early Christian communities in Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece, and developments in Christian theology, practice, and community formation at the beginning of the second century. Including a number of tables and charts, and with suggestions for further reading provided in each chapter, the central aim of the book is to place the era of early Christianity in the horizon of social and contemporary history normally classified as the early imperial period. It advances a comprehensive picture of early Christianity that takes seriously the movement's dynamics, developments, and contexts.

[Link to the publication.](#)

ROUTLEDGE FOCUS

Milja Radovic: Reframing Faith in Balkan



Reframing Faith in Balkan Documentary Film

History and Religion in
Yugoslav Space

MILJA RADOVIC



Documentary Film. History and Religion in Yugoslav Space. New York: Routledge 2025.

Reframing Faith in Balkan Documentary Film presents the first systematic study of the cinematic representations of religion in the early documentary film on the Balkan Peninsula from 1896 to 1939. By looking at faith through the concept of frame, this book sheds new light on the historical realities of the period as seen by the filmmakers and facilitates rediscovering the world of lost religious communities on the territory of Yugoslavia. Placing film language at the heart of scientific research and introducing the frame as a method of analysis, this book proposes novel ways of reading history as written on the reel. This intricate and in-depth study will interest film historians, particularly those interested in Balkan and European cinema, as well as historians of the Balkans, religion, and Eastern Europe.

[Link to the publication.](#)



JAN-HEINER TÜCK

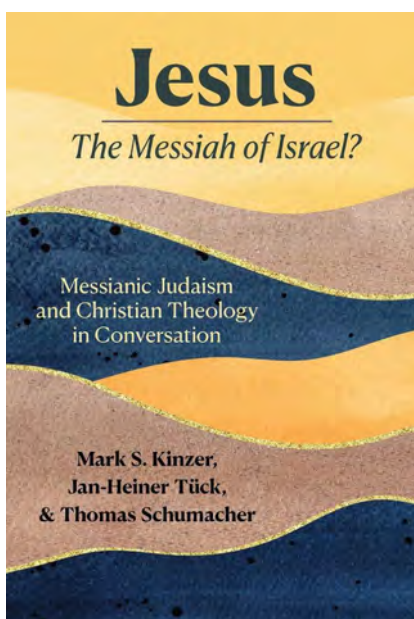
Megbocsátani a megbocsáthatatlant?

Teológiai tanulmányok

Jan-Heiner Tück: Megbocsátani a megbocsáthatatlant? Teológiai tanulmányok. Pannonhalma: Pannonhalmi Főapátság 2025.

The theological reflections sensitive to the suffering of historical victims, the need to assess the Christian relationship with Judaism, the attentive examination of modern literature's openness to transcendence, and historical contextual orientation—these are the dimensions in which Jan-Heiner Tück, one of the most prolific authors of his generation, operates. His writings introduce readers to some of the most vibrant debates of our time.

[Link to the publication.](#)



Jesus

The Messiah of Israel?

Messianic Judaism
and Christian Theology
in Conversation

Mark S. Kinzer,
Jan-Heiner Tück,
& Thomas Schumacher

Jan-Heiner Tück, Mark S. Kinzer, and Thomas Schumacher: Jesus — the Messiah of Israel? Messianic Judaism and Christian Theology in Conversation. New York: The Crossroads Publishing Company 2025.

Messianic Jews share with Christians the confession of Jesus as the Messiah. Nevertheless, they play almost no role in Jewish-Christian dialogue. Jews deny their Jewishness because they believe in Jesus; the churches, however, keep their distance because they do not want to endanger the official Jewish-Christian dialogue. Messianic Jews have a reputation for wanting to proselytize other Jews, but some of them have expressly renounced any claim to be missionaries. At the same time, the phenomenon can be observed that more and more Jews are coming to believe in Jesus, the Messiah of Israel and the nations, completely independently of missionary contacts.

This volume addresses this gap. It documents an

international symposium on the dialogue between Messianic Judaism and Christian theology, which took place in 2022 at the University of Vienna (Austria) under the patronage of Cardinal Christoph Schönborn. The contributions highlight the history and diversity of Messianic Judaism and explore Christological, ecclesiological and eschatological questions: What does the Jewish identity of Jesus mean for Christology? How should the surprising return of Jews who believe in Christ be interpreted? Can the return of many Jews to the land of Israel and the growing number of Messianic Jews be interpreted as signs of the end times?

PUBLICATIONS: Selected Articles

Marco Fiorletta, Andreas Telser: *Natura e sacramentalità. A partire da Wenn aber die Himmlischen di Friedrich Hölderlin*, in: *Hermeneutica. Annuario di filosofia e teologia* 2025, pp. 249-268.

This contribution offers a philosophical-theological reading of the relationship between God and nature, drawing on Friedrich Hölderlin's Entwurf Wenn aber die Himmlischen. The central concept is "sacramentality", understood as the mediation between the divine and the human through signs embedded in nature and poetic language. For Hölderlin, nature is envisioned as a place of encountering the sacred, where the divine symbolically manifests itself without being fully revealed. Hölderlin's poetry, with its fragmentary and experimental character, becomes a laboratory for rethinking the sacred, weaving together philosophy and theology. Engaging with interpreters such as Kearney and Tracy, this article explores the themes of measure (Maß) and mediation, demonstrating how nature, in its opacity, can be understood as a sacramental sign of the divine.

[Link to the publication.](#)

Milja Radovic: *100 Years of Sergei Eisenstein: Iconographic Language and Revolution*, in: *Journal of Religion & Film: Vol. 29: Iss. 2, Article 2.*

As we commemorate the 100th anniversary of Sergei Eisenstein's masterpiece Броненосец Потёмкин / Battleship Potemkin (1925), it is essential to re-examine the film that has had enduring influence on film theory, history, and scholarship. Voted one of the greatest films of all time, Eisenstein's cinematic genius has been crucial to understanding the power of film language. This paper focuses on the underexplored relationship between Eisenstein's film language and iconography, examining the ways in which Orthodox Christian iconography shaped the story of revolution. The paper delves into the ways in which Eisenstein conveyed complex ideas, demonstrating the technical developments of film language that have become essential to cinematic storytelling.

[Link to the publication \(full access\).](#)

[Discover more publications by our members](#)

VDTR: Vienna Doctoral School of Theology and Research on Religion



23 October 2025, 6-8pm: VDTR Research in the Spotlight. Book presentation with a public lecture by Julia Kornichuk (Kyiv)



Bucharest)

Two and a half years ago, the symposium '[War in Ukraine: Theological, Ethical and Historical Reflections](#)' was held at the University of Vienna. The corresponding volume, [published open access in March 2025](#), contains valuable insights from early-career Ukrainian researchers on various topics focusing on churches, religious institutions, beliefs, and practices.

We warmly invite you to a book presentation with a lecture by one of the authors, Julia Korniiuchuk (Kyiv/Bucharest). Afterwards, we will hear a response by Professor Dr. Kerstin Susanne Jobst, M.A. (University of Vienna) and engage in discussion, moderated by MMag. Georg Pulling (kathpress).

Location: Dekanatssitzungssaal der Katholisch-Theologischen Fakultät (staircase 8, second floor), Universitätsring 1, 1010 Wien.

[Find more information here.](#)

3 November 2025: Open Research Day

The Open Research Day, held once every semester, is a core element of our School. It provides an excellent opportunity for our PhD students and supervisors to meet, share insights and to network. Be part of our regular meeting date and get in touch with your peers.

[Register your participation here.](#)



Exploring Vienna's Religious Tapestry – Join us for two guided tours (in German)!

We are pleased to offer an opportunity to explore Vienna's rich religious heritage, based on the sites featured in our Audioguide:

- **24 October 2025, 1:00 PM:** A guided tour for the general public, with a warm invitation extended to all VDTR members. [Please register your participation here.](#)

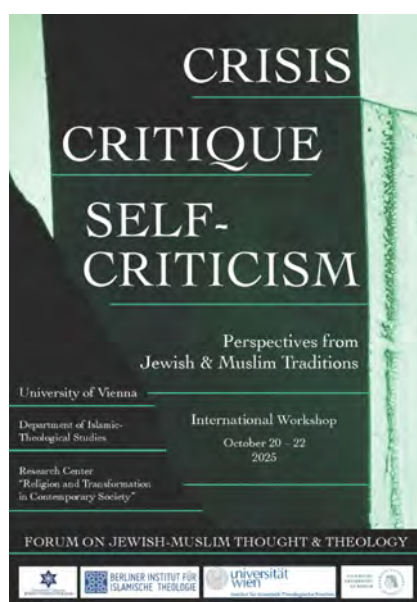
Prefer to explore at your own pace? [Check out our Audio Guide](#) and discover Vienna's Religious Tapestry at your own pace.



RESEARCH: Projects

THIRD PARTY FUNDED PROJECTS

UPCOMING EVENTS



October 20-22, 2025: CRISIS, CRITIQUE AND SELF-CRITICISM: Perspectives from Jewish and Muslim Traditions

October 20, 09:30 a.m.-October 22, 07:30 p.m., University of Vienna: Deans Office at the Faculty of Catholic Theology; Departement for Islamic-Theological Studies, Seminar Room i2/3, Ground Floor

The international conference “Crisis, Critique, Self-Criticism: Perspectives from Jewish and Muslim Traditions” will take place from October 20th to 22nd, 2025, at the University of Vienna, hosted by the Institute for Islamic Theological Studies. This event aims to bring together scholars from various disciplines to explore how Jewish and Muslim intellectual traditions have historically addressed crises, engaged in critique, and fostered self-criticism. These themes are particularly relevant in today’s world, where religious, social, and political challenges demand both critical reflection on others and an honest introspection of one’s own beliefs and practices.

The academic goal of this conference is to contribute to the ongoing scholarly dialogue on interreligious relations, especially between Judaism and Islam, by exploring how both traditions have handled internal and external criticism throughout history. Participants will engage with texts and case studies from both traditions to reflect on the historical and contemporary meanings of critique, crisis, and introspection, as well as on related concepts such as doubt, skepticism, ambiguity, and repair.

Beyond its academic importance, this conference has a broader societal relevance. In an increasingly interconnected world, understanding how different religious and cultural traditions engage with crises and criticism is crucial for overcoming prejudice and promoting social cohesion. Jewish and Muslim thought, with their long histories of dialogue, conflict, and mutual influence, offer valuable perspectives for addressing the complexities of modern pluralistic societies.

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

October 20, 2025: Feiertag – Freier Tag? Österreichs gesetzliche Feiertage auf dem Prüfstand

06, p.m., Haus der Geschichte Österreich, Neue Burg, Heldenplatz, 1010 Vienna

Most public holidays in Austria are connected to the calendar of the Roman Catholic Church. However, fewer and fewer people are familiar with the religious origins of these

holidays. Austria is undergoing a transformation towards a pluralistic and individualized society, raising questions about the legitimacy of predominantly religiously influenced public holidays in this changing context.

In this event, **Dirk Schuster** will first outline this societal change as well as the origins of today's public holidays. **Leonhard Jungwirth** will shed light on the founding ideals of the Second Republic and the debates surrounding the introduction of new holidays between 1945 and 1955. Finally, **Monika Sommer** will reflect on the intentions and discussions tied to the establishment of Austria's National Day on the occasion of its 60th anniversary.

The audience will also have its say: A live survey during the event will explore whether and how the attendees believe the official holiday calendar should be adapted for the 21st century. In a subsequent panel discussion, moderated by Eva Meran, the contributions from the speakers, the results of the audience survey, and the future of Austria's public holidays will be discussed collectively.

We kindly invite you to register in advance if you are interested. [Please click here to sign up.](#)



October 27, 2025: Grenzgänge und Revisionen - Annäherungen an Hans Schelkshorns *Entgrenzungen* und *Rethinking European Modernity*

09 a.m. - 06.:15 p.m., University of Vienna: Deans Office at the Faculty of Catholic Theology

This full-day workshop is dedicated to Hans Schelkshorn's studies on European modernity. The contributions will discuss his theses from various substantive and methodological perspectives. Hans Schelkshorn himself will respond to the presented reflections during the event.

With **Madalina Diaconu**, **Alfred Dunshirn**, **Sandra Lehmann**, **Jakob Rendl**, **Hans Schelkshorn**, **Alexander Strupp**, and **Fabian Völker**.

All interested parties are warmly invited to attend!

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



October 28, 2025: Book Presentation: *Wie wir leben wollen. Visionen für eine bessere Welt.*

7 p.m., *Buchhandlung Thalia*, *Mariahilfer Straße 99*, *1060 Wien*

Experts from academia, politics, and business paint a picture of what Austria might look like in ten years. The contributions cover the full spectrum of societal life, from health, climate, and the economy to youth, migration, and religion. Based on current scientific research, this book illustrates how the world will evolve and how we can shape our own future.

A discussion with the editors **Christian Friesl**, **Edith Meinhart**, and **Regina Polak**, as well as the authors. Moderated by: **Eva Linsinger**, ORF.

The organizers kindly ask for registration at anja.doppler@edition-a.at.

November 10, 2025: Herausforderungen im christlich-jüdischen Dialog nach dem 7. Oktober 2023

12 noon - 02 p.m., University of Vienna: Deans Office at the Faculty of Catholic Theology

The Jewish-Christian dialogue has, apart from some occasional tensions, experienced a generally successful development since 1945. However, with the events of October 7, 2023, this dialogue is now confronted with an unprecedented test of resilience. In this workshop, the current challenges and developments in the Christian-Jewish dialogue will be examined, particularly in the context of the events following October 7. After providing an overview of the immediate reactions and analyses related to the events of October 7, specific developments in German-speaking countries, the USA, and Israel will be outlined.

Registration by November 1 at monika.mannsbarth@univie.ac.at is required for participation.

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

PAST EVENTS



Photo Credit: Vol.27, "Gender and Postsecularity in Knowledge Production and Visual Culture": Büro für Öffentlichkeitsarbeit, Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien

On Wednesday, 07 May 2025 the **Gender Research Office at the University of Vienna** hosted a double-event: A book launch of the anthology [Gender and Postsecularity in Visual Culture and Knowledge Production](#) (Eds.: Boka En, Sabine Grenz, Doris Guth, Fatma Uysal) as well as a Round Table Gender Talk with the seven international guests **Demet Gülçiçek, Kim Knibbe, Maki Kimura, Mia Liinason, Michal Kravel-Tovi, Nella van den Brandt and Tanya Zion-Waldok**. It was facilitated and moderated by Ass. Prof. Dr. Sabine Grenz. The events could take place thanks to the financial support by RaT.

The events touched on numerous questions. Particularly on the following ones: How does religion continue to shape contemporary societies, even in seemingly secular contexts? How do gender, sexuality, and activism intersect with religious and secular divides? And how can scholars navigate and critically engage with these complexities in a postsecular world?

A wide range of subjects such as religious feminisms, the far-right's entanglement with

religious identity and militarized masculinity, interreligious relationships and agency, and critical activism within religious communities were discussed at the event.

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:

RaT-Blog @ derstandard

- **Christoph Novak:** [Warum das erste Jerusalem verteidigt werden muss. Von Sarajevo bis Gaza: Pluralität als Voraussetzung für Menschlichkeit und Demokratie](#)
 - In the guest blog post, political scientist Christoph Novak writes that the defense of Jerusalem does not lie in political camp-thinking but in the protection of diversity and humanity as the foundation for peaceful coexistence – in Israel, Palestine, and far beyond.

Notable Media Appearances

- **Hüseyin Çiçek:** [Fortschritt oder subtile Disziplinierung der Aleviten?](#)
 - In a guest commentary in the Austrian daily newspaper Der Standard, Hüseyin Çiçek analyzes the debate on equality for Alevi in Turkey and examines whether this report, which is the subject of intense discussion in Turkey, actually represents progress, or whether subtle disciplinary measures by the religious authority Diyanet are to be expected.
- **Hans Gerald Hödl:** [Gedanken für den Tag: Friedrich Nietzsche](#)
 - From 18 to 23 August, Hans Gerald Hödl was speaking in the Ö1 series "Gedanken für den Tag" about Friedrich Nietzsche's thinking and its influence on art, literature and popular culture, on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of his death.
- **Regina Polak and Peter Schipka:** [„Religion: verbunden oder getrennt?“, Podcast des österreichischen Parlaments, Episode 75, August 2025](#)
 - In the podcast-series of the Austrian Parliament, Regina Polak together with Peter Schipka, the general Secretary of the Austrian Bishops' Conference, discussed the relationship between religion and politics in contemporary societies in Austria and Europe
- **Regina Polak:** ["Mein Kinderglauben ist mir abhanden gekommen", Die Presse, August 24, 2025](#)
 - In the Austrian „Die Presse - Spectrum“ Regina Polak was interviewed about her religious biography and perspectives on faith.

RAT-BLOG

During the last months we published articles by our members and guest authors that cover a broad range of topics:

- **Willemien Otten:** [A New Pope, A New Dawn](#)
 - Personal reflections on the papacy, an American pontiff, and hope that faith and leadership may yet shape our fractured world. By Willemien Otten, Professor at the University of Chicago Divinity School. With an Introduction by Andreas Telser.
- **Milja Radovic:** [The Zero Theorem – “Zero must equal 100%”\[1\]. AI, Totalitarianism, and The Voluntary Path to Self-Enslavement: A Theological Perspective](#)
 - The question of what philosophy and theology have to contribute to the

development of AI has been a matter of scholarly debates. While AI entered common human lives almost abruptly and immediately, human adaptability proved impeccable: AI became a part of life as another commodity. In her contribution, Milja Radovic explores the possible downsides of AI from a theological point of view and asks the question: Is AI really for the benefit of humanity?

- **Veronika Hübner:** [The Small Stone in the Shoe. When Obsession Meets Grace: The Ambiguities of Scrupulosity – A Review of „Can Scrupulosity Be Spiritually Innocent?“](#)
 - In her article, Veronika Hübner reflects on a recent lecture by Tasia Scrutton at the European Academy of Religion, exploring the ambiguities of Scrupulosity—a religiously infused obsessive-compulsive condition that can deeply disrupt faith while occasionally fostering spiritual depth.
- **Milja Radovic:** [“Do you Hear the People Sing?” Cultural \(Re\)Interpretations and Reshaping Memory](#)
 - In the world inter-wired through social media and AI, cultural reinterpretations and appropriations receive ever increasingly new meanings. Frequently cultural (re)interpretations and reshaping of historical memories form a dangerous mode for societal discourses. In this article Milja Radovic focusses on the Balkan Peninsula and considers it as one of the most important places in Europe where a dynamic processes through which communities reshape history, memory and culture takes place.

Impressum

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