

CONFERENCE

‘Interpreting Rituals: Historiographical Perspectives and Pluralistic Contexts’

Leiden University, 29-31 October 2018



Leids Universiteits Fonds



LUCSoR
Leiden University
Centre for the
Study of Religion



Nederlands Genootschap
voor Godsdienstwetenschap

Max-Weber-Kolleg



NOSTER

Nederlandse Onderzoekschool voor Theologie en Religiewetenschap
Netherlands School for Advanced Studies in Theology and Religion



BRILL

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Venues

Monday 29 October

Masterclass

Johan Huizinga Building
Doelensteeg 16
2311 VL Leiden
Room 0.25

Drinks and registration

Restaurant Faculty Club
[Academy Building](#)
Rapenburg 73
2311 GJ Leiden

Keynote lecture by Prof. Aaron Hughes

Klein Auditorium
Academy Building

Tuesday 30 October

Keynote lecture by Prof. Nurit Stadler

[Kamerlingh Onnes Building](#)
Steenshuur 25
2311 ES Leiden
Room A. 144 'Lorentztaal' (first floor)

Panel sessions

Kamerlingh Onnes Building
B-wing (ground floor)
Rooms B. 013/B. 014/B.016/B.017

Conference dinner

[Restaurant Puur](#)
Pieterskerk Choorsteeg 9
2311 TR Leiden

Wednesday 31 October

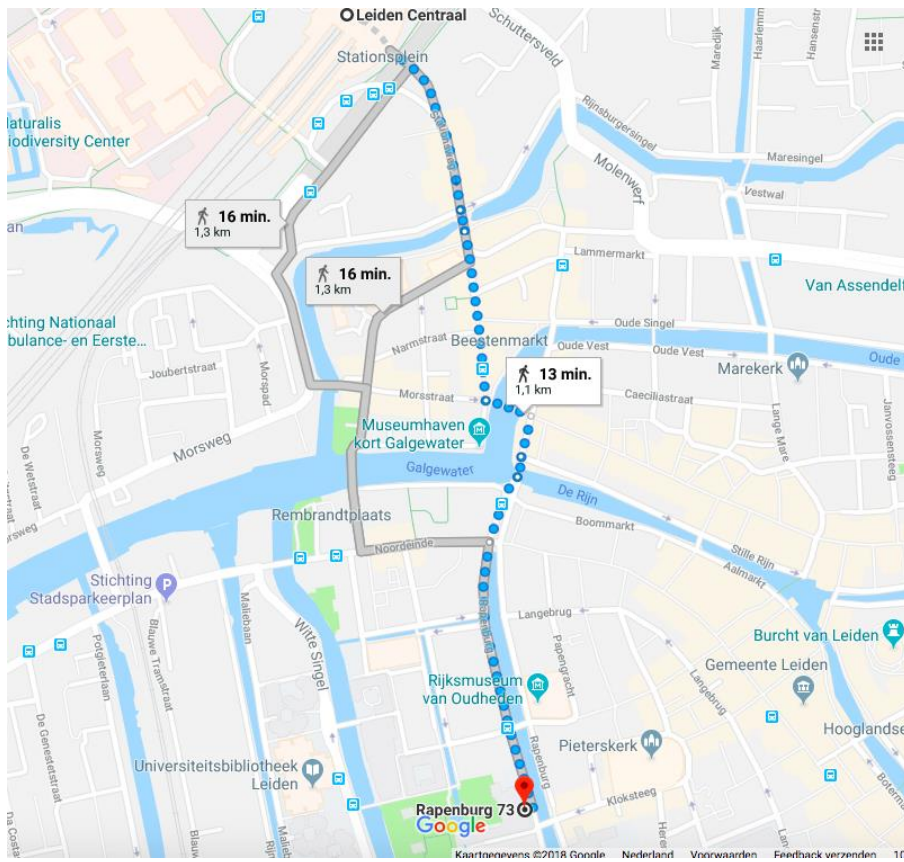
Panel sessions

Kamerlingh Onnes Building
B-wing (ground floor)
Rooms B.020/B0.31/B.035

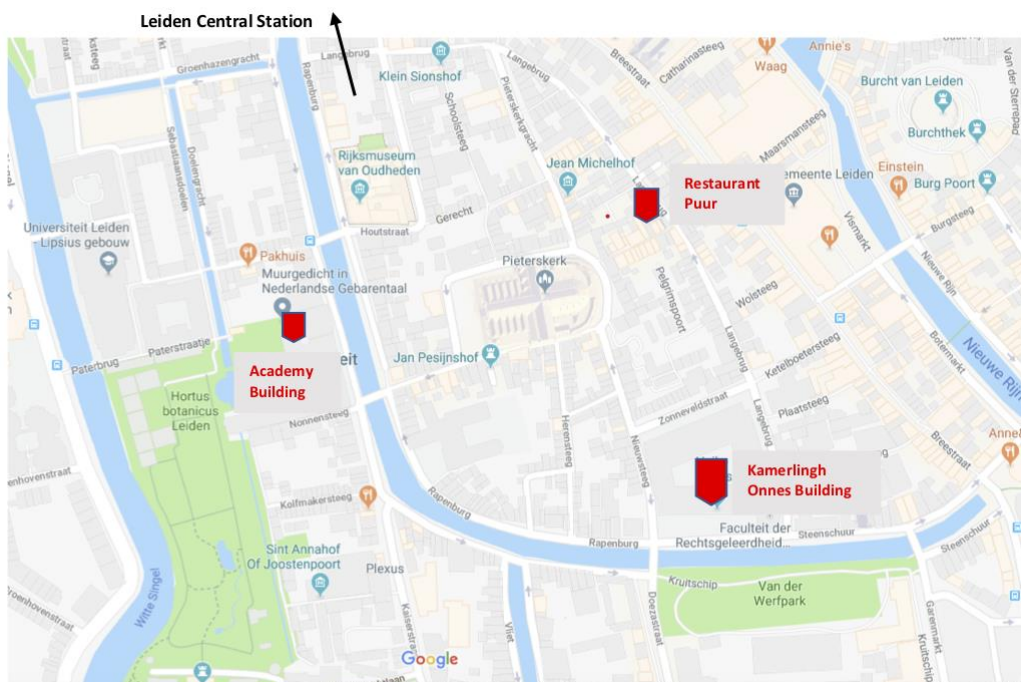
Keynote lecture by Leo Samama and concert

Klein Auditorium
Academy Building

Map walking route Leiden Central Station to Academy Building



Map with venues



Program

Monday 29 October

11.00 -16.30 *Masterclass* (only for selected PhD candidates and research master students)
with Jörg Rüpke about his book *Pantheon: A New History of Roman Religion*

Opening of the conference

14.00-15.30 Walking Tour of Leiden: starts at IBIS Hotel
Register by sending an e-mail to Dorieke Molenaar:
d.molenaar@hum.leidenuniv.nl

17.00-18.00 Registration and drinks
[Academy Building](#), Rapenburg 73 Leiden

18.00-18.05 Word of welcome: Prof. Erik-Jan Zürcher, Academic Director of the Leiden
Institute for Area Studies
Klein Auditorium (Academy Building)

18.05-19.00 **Keynote Lecture by Aaron Hughes** (University of Rochester), 'Contextualizing
Jewish Studies through the Study of Ritual'
Chair: Judith Frishman

Tuesday 30 October

10.00-11.00 **Keynote Lecture by Nurit Stadler** (Hebrew University Jerusalem),
‘The Many Voices of the Ritual: Devotions to Female Saint Shrines in
Israel/Palestine’
Chair: Cristiana Facchini
Room A144 ‘Lorentztaal’

11.00-11.30 Coffee/tea at Restaurant Kamerlingh Onnes Building

11.30-13.00 **Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4**

Session 1 ‘Jewish Life Cycle’

Room B. 013 | Chair: Leon Mock

Belin Benezra (Bogazici University & Leiden University)

‘The Transformation and (Reinvented) Traditions of Social and Religious Life
Cycle Events of the Sephardic Community of Istanbul’

Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah (Leiden University)

‘Jewish Henna Ceremonies in the 21st Century’

Hizky Shoham (Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan & Shalom Hartman Institute in
Jerusalem)

‘The Conceptual and Anthropological History of *Bat Mitzvah*: Between Rite de
Passage and Augmented Birthday’

Session 2 ‘Rituals of Violence and the Jews’

Room B.014 | Chair: Karin Neutel

Jan Bremmer (University of Groningen)

‘Rites of Violence in Alexandria AD 38: The First Pogrom?’

Jan Willem van Henten (University of Amsterdam)

‘Razis’ Self-Killing (2 Maccabees 14:37-46) as a Jewish Ritual’

Rebecca Sebbagh (Universität Erfurt)

‘Stereotyped Description of Ritual? – Narratives of Kiddush ha-Shem
(Sanctification of the Name) and Their Halakhic Sources’

Session 3 ‘Ritual in Narrative’

Room B.016 | Chair: t.b.a.

Jacqueline Borsje (University of Amsterdam)
‘Powerful Texts for Protection and Invisibility’

Reuven Kiperwasser (Ariel University, Ariel)
‘Every Day Rituals, Funeral Scenes and Rabbinic Subject’

Markéta Kabůrková (National Museum Archive, Prague & Ruhr-University Bochum)
‘Ritual Schism in the Toldot Yeshu Narrative’

Session 4 ‘Ritual and Modern Identity 1’

Room B.017 | Chair: Judith Frishman

Adi Sherzer (The Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel & Zionism, Be'er Sheva)
‘The National Holiday and the Jewish Rituals: The Case of *Yom Ha'Atsmaut* (1948-1958)’

Paul Michael Kurtz (Faculty of Divinity & Queens' College, Cambridge)
‘Jewish or Jew-ish? Marking Boundaries of Ancient Identity in 19th Century Judaism’

Davide Mano (EHESS, Paris)
‘Rediscovering Jewish Rituals of Commemoration from Late 18th Century Italy: Virtual Citizenship, Positive Memory and Political Message’

13.00-14.00	Lunch at Restaurant Kamerlingh Onnes Building
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14.00-15.30	Sessions 5, 6, 7, 8
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Session 5 ‘Ritual and Modern Identity 2’

Room B. 013 | Chair: Davide Mano

Bram Colijn (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
‘Pluripraxis Households in Modern China: Contested Family Rituals in a Shifting Religious Landscape’

Gerard Wiegers (University of Amsterdam)
‘Ritual, Conflict, and Memory: Kristallnacht Commemorations in the Netherlands and Jewish-Muslim Relations’

Martijn Stoutjesdijk (Tilburg School of Catholic Theology)
‘Judaism, Slavery and Transfer of Ritual: from Seder Meal to Ketu Koti’

Session 6 ‘Ritual Theory 1’

Room B.014 | Chair: Tamás Biró

William Arfman (Tilburg University)

‘A History of Liminality: Plurality and the Problem of the Liminoid’

Ab de Jong (Leiden University)

‘What Zoroastrianism Lacks (and What that Means, and Why Everyone Should Care)’

Nathal Dessing (Leiden University)

‘Setting Oneself Apart? Ritual Practice in Pluralistic Contexts’

Session 7 ‘Art/Drama 1’

Room B.016 | Chair: Megan Blocksom

Elza Kuyk (Utrecht University & Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

‘Is there Liturgy in Contemporary Art Performances?’

Levi Weinstein (Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Be'er Sheva & Herzog College)

‘Hasidic Legal Drama therapy. Jewish Ritual as Therapeutic Legal Norms at the Interface between Performance and Psychotherapy’

Hadas Reshef (Freie Universität Berlin)

‘Interpreting Rituals: Three Initial Activities of Modern Preoccupation with Jewish Art’

Session 8 ‘Ritual Model, Ritual Disruption and the Beginning of Christianity’

Room B.017 | Chair: Jan Willem van Henten

Tom Blanton (Universität Erfurt)

‘Abraham as Ritual Model in Genesis, Jubilees, and Pauline Epistles’

Karin Neutel (University of Oslo)

‘Ritual Disruption: Circumcision as a Rite of Exclusion and Inclusion at the Beginning and End of Christianity’

15.30-16.00	Coffee/tea at Restaurant Kamerlingh Onnes Building
16.00-17.30	Sessions 9, 10, 11, 12

Session 9 ‘Ritual Theory 2’

Room B.013 | Chair: William Arfman

Tamás Biró (ELTE Eötvös Loránd University & Jewish Theological Seminary - University of Jewish Studies, Budapest)

‘Modes of Religiosity and the History of Jewish Rituals’

Tommy Cowan (University of Amsterdam)

‘Storm the Citadels: Archontism and the Resistance to Secularized Ritual’

Mark Beumer (Tilburg University)

‘Temple Sleep: A Close Encounter of Ritual Dynamics. An Historiographic Exploration’

Session 10 ‘Art/Drama 2’

Room B. 014 | Chair: Hadas Reshef

Megan Blocksom (Baldwin Wallace University, Berea, Ohio)

‘The Rhetoric of Religious Rituals: 17th Century Dutch Processional Imagery in an Increasingly Secular Context’

Francesco Trentini (Ca’ Foscari University, Venezia)

‘Beyond Stereotypes. Jewish Ritual Influencing Christian Liturgical Imagery’

Miriam Sklarz (Orot Israel College, Rehovot)

‘Three Rituals Attributed to Melchizedek: Rabbinic, Christian & Polemic’

Session 11 ‘Rituals in Antiquity’

Room B. 016 | Chair: Benedikt Kranemann

Peter-Ben Smit (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

‘Ritual competition and ritual Failure in Philo's *De vita contemplativa*’

Maureen Attali (Université Rennes 2)

‘The Jewish Depositio of Jacob and David in 6th Century Hebron: Christian Misunderstanding or First Testimony of a Newer Jewish Ritual?’

Kristel Henquet (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam & Leiden University)

‘Offering Body Parts: Dedicating Terracotta Anatomical Votives in Hellenistic Central Italy’

Session 12 'Transformation of Ritual'

Room B. 017 | Chair: Corey Williams

Agata Rejowska-Pasek (Jagiellonian University, Krakow)

'Between Ritual and Performance. Humanist Marriages in Poland'

Wouter van Beek (Leiden University)

'African Masks in Changing Contexts. General Ritual?'

Leon Mock (Tilburg University)

'The Evil Spirit and the Washing of the Hand in Contemporary Rabbinic Responsa'

18.00-20.30 Conference dinner at restaurant [Puur](#)
Pieterskerk Choorsteeg 9 Leiden

Wednesday 31 October

10.00-11.30 **Sessions 13, 14, 15**

Session 13 ‘Liturgy 1’

Room B. 020 | Cristiana Facchini

Benedikt Kranemann (Universität Erfurt)

‘Liturgy as a Church Performance. Paradigms of Liturgical Studies in the 19th Century’

Gerard Rouwhorst (Tilburg University)

‘The Scholarly Study of Liturgy: From Modernist Interests to 21st Century Methodology’

Judith Frishman (Leiden University)

‘19th and 20th Century Understandings of Jewish Liturgy’

Session 14 ‘Hinduism 1: Asia’

Room B. 031 | Chair: Freek Bakker

Tineke Nugteren (Tilburg University)

‘Bare Feet and Sacred Ground: Viṣṇu Was Here’

Catrien Notermans (Radboud University Nijmegen)

‘Prayers Made of Cow Dung’

Deborah de Koning (Tilburg University)

‘Celebrating the Nation: Ritualizing Ravana’

Session 15 ‘Spatial Arrangements and Foci of Ritual in Antiquity’

Room B. 035 | Chair: Ab de Jong

Jürgen K. Zangenberg (Leiden University)

‘Exploring the *Bemah* in the Byzantine Synagogue of Horvat Kur’

Diana Pavel (Universität Erfurt)

‘Interpreting Depictions of Altars within Etruscan Iconography’

Jörg Rüpke (Universität Erfurt)

‘Focusing Ritual Attention’

11.30-11.45	Coffee/tea
11.45-13.15	Sessions 16, 17, 18

Session 16 ‘Liturgy 2’

Room B. 020 | Gerard Rouwhorst

Cristiana Facchini (Alma Mater Studiorum, University of Bologna)
‘Jewish Preaching and Baroque Culture. Christians and Jews Performing in the City’

Veronika Klimova (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań)
‘Rituals in the Light of *The Karaite Catechism in Brief* by Moses Firkovich’

Jonathan Pater (Tilburg University)
‘Revisiting *Afikoman*: Between Roman Drinking Customs and Jewish Ritual’

Session 17 ‘Hinduism 2: The Netherlands’

Room B. 031 | Chair: Tineke Nugteren

Freek Bakker (Utrecht University)
‘The Ritual’s Home in Dutch Hinduism’

Priya Swamy (Leiden University)
‘Cuddling the Gods: ‘Cute’ Hanuman as a Ritual Object among Surinamese Hindu Communities in the Netherlands’

Pieter van der Woude (Utrecht University)
‘Hindu Temple Processions in the Dutch Public Space’

Session 18 ‘Death Mentalities through the Lens of Rituals of Death and Dying 1’

Room B. 035 | Chair: Janieke Bruin-Mollenhorst

Caroline Brasjen-Mudde (Utrecht University)
‘Emancipation and Negotiation in Early Modern Catholic Mourning in the Dutch Republic’

Kim van der Weegen (Erasmus Medical Center, Rotterdam)
‘Ritualization as Meaning-Making Practice in Palliative Care’

Brenda Mathijssen (University of Groningen)
‘Corpse Mentalities: Cultures of Post-mortem Care among Funerary Professionals and the Bereaved’

13.15-14.15	Lunch at Restaurant Kamerlingh Onnes Building
14.15-15.45	Sessions 19, 20, 21

Session 19 ‘Rabbinic Ritual’

Room B. 020: John-Harmen Valk

Meir Bar-Ilan (Bar-Ilan University)

‘Worshipping Demons: Between Spain and the Land of Israel’

Shana Schick (University of Haifa)

‘The Emergence of Ritual as a Distinct Category in Rabbinic Thought’

Nathan MacDonald (Saint John’s College, University of Cambridge)

‘Nadab and Abihu's Ritual Innovation (Leviticus 10)’

Session 20 ‘Death Mentalities through the Lens of Rituals of Death and Dying 2’

Room B. 035 | Chair: Brenda Mathijssen

Janieke Bruin-Mollenhorst (Tilburg University)

‘Ave Maria between the Religious and Personal Sacred’

Joanna Wojtkowiak (University of Humanistic Studies, Utrecht)

‘Death Representations and Aesthetics in Western Funerals’

Martin J.M. Hoondert (Tilburg University)

‘Renewal in the Material Culture of Cremations since 2000’

Session 21 ‘Good Quality Teaching Materials for Religion Education’

Room B. 031 | Chair: Markus Davidsen

Markus Altena Davidsen (Leiden University)

‘The NGG Working Group on Religion Education: Plans and Goals’

Wanda Alberts (Leibniz Universität Hannover)

‘School Education about Religion Beyond the World Religions Paradigm?’

Sissel Undheim (University of Bergen)

‘The Study of Religion and the New Core Curriculum in the Norwegian School Subject Religion’

Joël Valk (Corderius College Amersfoort)

‘Image Use in Religion Text Books: The Case of the Dutch “Perspectief Series”’

15.45-16.15 Coffee and tea

16.15-16.30 walk to Klein Auditorium (Academy Building)

16.30-17.30 **Keynote Lecture by Leo Samama** ‘Music as Ritual, Rituals in Music’
Klein Auditorium_(Academy Building)
Chair: Birgit Meyer

17.30-18.00 **Concert by Irene Maessen** (soprano) & **Eleonore Pameijer** (flute)
Klein Auditorium

Psalm 16:8 (Hebrew)

Dajan Ha-emet (Hebrew)

Jeff Hamburg-Joshe Kalb Songs (4 songs in Yiddish)

Louis Lewandowski-Hashkivenu (Hebrew)

Maurice Ravel-L'Enigme éternel (Yiddish)

Maurice Ravel- Kaddish (Hebrew)

Leon Stein-Adagio and Chassidic Dance (flute and tambourine)

Mordechai Gebirtig- Hershele, Yiddish folk song

Keynote Speakers

Prof. Aaron W. Hughes

University of Rochester

‘Contextualizing Jewish Studies through the Study of Ritual’

At first blush the academic study of Judaism takes place in a vacuum. This is on account of the field’s connection to the particular, in addition to the larger academy’s unwillingness to deal adequately with post-biblical Judaism. Despite important attempts, Jewish studies is rarely in conversation with the interests of and problems articulated by the academic study of religion. I seek to explore some of the reasons behind this gulf. After a historical overview of the study of Jewish ritual, I then argue that the study of ritual—its importance to the study of religion more generally—holds out hope for a greater integration between Jewish Studies and Religious Studies.

Aaron W. Hughes is the Philip S. Bernstein Professor of Jewish Studies in the Dept. of Religion and Classics at the University of Rochester. He is the author of *The Study of Judaism: Identity, Authenticity, Scholarship* (SUNY Press, 2013), *Jacob Neusner: An American Jewish Iconoclast* (NYU Press, 2016), and *Shared Identities: Medieval and Modern Imaginings of Judeo-Islam* (Oxford, 2017).

Leo Samama

‘Music as Ritual, Rituals in Music’

Music has its origin in a distant past, when the sounds of communication could be interpreted as either words or mere sounds, of which the latter could be indicated as music. It is clear that from the outset, music was indeed used for communication, and not only between people, but with the spiritual world. Thus music can be used in rituals and incantations.

Music is not only part of numerous religious rituals, but all kind of rituals are part of music too (e.g. by the use of rhythm or repetition or chant-like melodies). Over the centuries the church became the opera house and the concert hall, a place to gather, to contemplate and to venerate.

The last part of my short lecture will be an introduction to the subsequent recital with Jewish music.

Leo Samama (1951) studied musicology at Utrecht University, and composition with Rudolf Escher. From 1977 until 1991, he taught at the Utrecht Conservatory and Utrecht University, while also writing reviews and articles for some of the major newspapers in the country.

He was artistic administrator of the Residentie Orkest The Hague (1994-2003) and artistic and general manager of the world famous Netherlands Chamber Choir (2003-2010). He is one of the founders of the Netherlands String Quartet Academy and of the Tenso Network for European professional chamber choirs.

As an author Samama wrote books on Dutch music in the 20th Century (*Nederlandse muziek in de 20ste eeuw*, AUP 2006), on the composer *Alphons Diepenbrock* (Amsterdam, AUP 2012), but also A brief overview of *Thousand Years of British Music* (Amsterdam, AUP 2003), and recently *The Meaning of Music* (Chicago University Press, 2016). His extensive survey of the history of the solo concerto was released in 2015 (*Het soloconcert*, AUP 2015) and of the string quartet in 2018 (*Het strijkkwartet*, AUP 2018).

Since his first official opus in 1975, the compositions of Leo Samama are performed in The Netherlands and abroad, and gave rise to numerous recordings and commissions. Since 2006 his many university lectures have been released on CD, amongst which the successful box with 8 hours *Klinkende Geschiedenis* (a history of music in sound – of which over 7.000 boxes were sold).

In June 2010, Leo Samama was appointed an Officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau, in recognition of his service and achievements for Dutch music.

For further information, see: www.leosamama.nl

Prof. Nurit Stadler

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Department of Sociology and Anthropology

‘The Many Voices of the Ritual: Devotions to Female Saint Shrines in Israel/Palestine’

In my lecture, I will discuss the nature of the ritual in post modernity. To discuss this I focus on the revival of ritual in shrines dedicated to female saints. To do so I comparatively study the rituals that take place in Christian and Judaic shrines dedicated to female Saints across Israel-Palestine and their place in rapport to how people enact land ownership through recourse to religious discourse and praxis. I explore female materiality produced in sites that creates feminine religious experiences. Rituals involve body rituals that imitate the stages of the cycle of life from birth to death and rebirth. Materiality also pervades these rituals shaping themes of motherhood and femininity. Groups involved in territorial struggles lay claim to land through religious codes and modes. In this way I uncover how Muslim, Jewish and Christian pilgrims impact and impinge upon one another in terms of the forms of religiosity adhered to and how land claims are enacted over disputed territories and how they effect the landscape. I develop my explanation by arguing that there has been a revival in rituals that take place in female sacred spaces due to messy borders, war and contestation for land. In this reality, the ritual at female saint shrines comprises a means for devotees to counter the violent, masculine war culture, extol feminine attributes and values, and in so doing lay claim to terrain.

Session 1 ‘Jewish Life Cycle’

Belin Benezra Yensarfati MA

Bogazici University & Leiden University

‘The Transformation and (Reinvented) Traditions of Social and Religious Life Cycle Events of the Sephardic Community of Istanbul’

This paper sheds light on the generational changes and continuities in the meaning and practice of the cultural and social events and rituals among the Sephardic Jewish Community in Istanbul from the 1960s until the present. The data on the social and religious celebrations of weddings, Brit Milah (circumcision), and Bar/t Mitzvah ceremonies collected via fieldwork, archive work and in-depth interviews will be presented.

Due to the dissolution of the spatial old neighborhood life, the demise of Ladino as the community’s language, the decrease in population and decline of attendance at the cultural associations’ events, the Turkish Sephardic Jewish Community has relatively few occasions where people come together socially and religiously. One of the most important areas which bring people together is the rituals and traditions. In addition to this, rituals and traditions take place in social and religious ceremonies that also serve to form the community’s identity.

In this paper, these rituals/events are taken into consideration as a negotiation arena where the various agents can take place. To this end, three active agents namely, religious institutions, the party sector, and intergenerational relations, negotiate in the arena of rituals and contribute to the formation of meaning and transformation of the authority concept by constructing control mechanisms or challenging them.

First, community and religious institutions (or secular and religious authorities) determine the rules and have the authority to relax the rules from time to time in the arena of festive events. The second source of influence is the private companies, including event and party planners, music and video companies, choreographers and caterers. During the last three or four decades, the private companies have become visible at all levels of the festivities in the Istanbul Jewish community and are perceived as ‘knowing’ the proper way of conducting and celebrating these ceremonies. They are often owned or co-owned by Jews themselves and thus the money generated by the current "events sector" has led to self-contained economic growth within the Istanbul Jewish community.

The third and last agent, which is the central part of the study, are the generations of ordinary members of the community who are practicing and celebrating these rituals. Here, I employ Mannheim’s notion of generation whereby the older generation becomes an agent and a source by transferring cultural values and rituals orally to the younger one. The younger generation also becomes an agent by collaborating with the event organizers and by challenging or adjusting to the authority of religious institutions.

Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah MA

Leiden University

Leiden University Centre for the Study of Religion

‘Jewish Henna Ceremonies in the 21st Century’

This paper explores contemporary henna ceremony practices among Jewish communities in Israel and the Diaspora. Historically, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Henna ceremonies were an integral part of engagement and wedding traditions for diverse Jewish communities geographically spanning Morocco to India. Each Jewish sub-group’s customs surrounding henna ceremonies differed with aspects of the celebration including special foods, songs, dress, gifts and other rituals.

Unsurprisingly, the traditions of each community are often tied to regional culture with strong similarities to local the Muslim, and Christian communities in each region. However, in the period between 1948-1967 the majority of these Jewish communities immigrated to Israel with smaller groups settling in Europe, and North America. With this mass migration henna ceremonies fell out of style for several decades, and if performed, were limited to intimate family circles. However, in the twenty-first the henna ceremony has re-emerged as a popular custom not only for Jews of North African and Middle Eastern origins but also for some Ashkenazi Jews particularly those marrying into non-Ashkenazi families. In the twenty-first century rendition specific henna traditions have become mixed, for example, a family may serve Moroccan food, rent traditional Yemenite dress for the occasion, and choose to sing songs in Hebrew opposed to Arabic. The ceremonies have also become larger and act as an occasion to introduce Ashkenazi and non-Jewish friends to aspects of Sephardi/Mizrahi culture. This paper discusses the reasons for the reemergence of henna ceremonies and what can be learned from the evolution of henna traditions, arguing that the mixing of different traditions, is indicative of the integration of Sephardi/Mizrahi customs into normative Israeli/Jewish culture in the twenty-first century.

Dr Hizky Shoham

Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan & Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem

‘The Conceptual and Anthropological History of Bat Mitzvah: Between Rite de Passage and Augmented Birthday’

The suggested paper tracks the modern emergence of *bat mitzvah*, the Jewish coming-of-age ceremony for girls—as both a term in language and a ritual. What does bat mitzvah mean in the industrialized world, which knows almost no rites of passage from childhood to adolescence? To understand its 20th-century appearance, I suggest distinguishing classic rites of initiation from the system of life cycle ceremonies typical of modern consumer culture, which emphasizes the transition between temporal markers rather than social statuses and imposes no task on the birthday celebrant. I then suggest that the term *bat mitzvah* has two main lexical meanings: first, the new religious status that a Jewish girl acquires—that of an adult obligated by the precepts of Jewish law; second, the event or ritual marking this milestone. While the former understands the membership in the community as something to be ritually acquired, through a rite of initiation, the latter understands it as a status given by birth, and interprets the bat mitzvah as an augmented birthday party informed by modern consumer culture. The close examination of the concept’s various meanings in different Jewish languages tracks its development from its hesitant beginnings in the nineteenth century to its emergence as a key concept that refers to a central ceremony in the Jewish world of the twentieth century, with a major difference between the Western Diaspora and Israel, related to the different weights assigned to the initiation element in the two contexts.

Session 2 ‘Rituals of Violence and the Jews’

Prof. Jan Bremmer
University of Groningen

‘Rites of Violence in Alexandria AD 38: the First Pogrom?’

Among the best known and least edifying events to take place in Alexandria were the riots in AD 38 when Greek and Egyptian Alexandrians set upon the Judeans, confined them to a kind of ghetto, plundered their houses, and lynched those that strayed from that ghetto. The incident has regularly been compared to the notorious pogroms of late nineteenth-century Russia, and Pieter van der Horst has called his commentary on Philo’s *Flaccus*, the most important source for this event ‘The First Pogrom’. The label ‘pogrom’ raises the question to what extent the comparison is useful and what role religious violence played in the metropolis. I will here concentrate on the events in Alexandria as they are the best-attested case in the early Roman Empire. Unlike earlier accounts, it is my aim to give a ‘thick description’ of the course of events, using modern insights about pogroms and religious riots and paying attention to the symbolic value of the various institutions and artifacts mentioned by Philo.

Prof. Jan Willem van Henten
University of Amsterdam
Department Religious Studies

‘Razis’ Self-Killing (2 Maccabees 14:37-46) as a Jewish Ritual’

2 Maccabees 14:37-46 narrates the brief noble death story of the elder Razis, a “father of the Jews” who loved his compatriots. The Seleucid general Nicanor wanted to set an example to the Jews by arresting Razis as a prominent Jew, but Razis prevents that by killing himself before Nicanor’s soldiers get hold of him. Razis kills himself in an ostentatious and gruesome way. His self-killing takes place in several steps and the author focuses very much on Razis’ body parts. Razis first tries to kill himself with a sword and then throws himself from a wall in an attempt to hit Nicanor’s soldiers (14:43). The author highlights the blood that he spills while running through the crowd of soldiers (14:45). When Razis has lost all of his blood, he hurls his entrails at the crowd and in his very last words he calls upon God to have them returned (14:46). So far, attempts to make sense of Razis’ self-killing have mainly connected it with Graeco-Roman traditions about self-killings that have an effect for the in-group as well as the enemy (Menoceus’ self-killing as described in Euripides’ tragedy *Phoenician Women* and the Roman *devotio*). However, Graeco-Roman traditions fail short of explaining some of the details in this ritual death and also run counter to the connotations that these details may evoke from a Jewish perspective. This paper aims at re-interpreting Razis’ self-killing as a ritual enactment from a Jewish perspective. It will apply ritual theory in order to analyze the function of Razis’ acts and statement and attempt to re-interpret the peculiar details of the self-killing (e.g. the blood, the entrails and the reference to a call upon God) in the light of the narrative context of 2 Maccabees, Jewish rituals and the Jewish tradition at large.

Rebecca Sebbagh MA

Universität Erfurt

Max-Weber-Kolleg für kultur- und sozialwissenschaftliche Studien

Dynamics of Jewish Ritual Practices in Pluralistic Contexts from Antiquity to the Present

‘Stereotyped Description of Ritual? – Narratives of Kiddush ha-Shem (Sanctification of the Name) and Their Halakhic Sources’

In the Jewish literature, there are several narratives of the Kiddush ha-Shem ritual (sanctification of the name). Most prominently there are the crusades narratives, the *Sefer Yossipon* or the *Megillat Antiochus*, which has been read at Chanukka in the synagogues. Beside this narratives, there is a whole halakhic literature on the topic of Kiddush ha-Shem.

Already discussed in the literature (by Ivan G. Marcus and Robert Chazan) is the question of the character of the crusade chronicles and of other “historiographic” texts. The question discussed there was, how historically correct the texts are or if they are more fictional than real.

Taking a closer look at these narratives, the question arises if these stories are descriptions of real rituals or if these stories are stereotyped descriptions, not with the aim of describing real rituals but to be “narratives” of ethical conduct. Additionally, it seems to be that these narratives are closely connected to the halakhic sources of the Kiddush ha-Shem. It seems, that the halakhic sources and their description of the Kiddush ha-Shem ritual are in some narratives the sources of the texts. A comparison of the narratives with the halakhic texts will show, that many of the narratives are based on the halakhic texts and are a narrative adaptation of these halakhic texts.

The text on which I will focus is the (halakhic) text of *She’ilta* 44 (Ed. Mirsky), which can be considered as a summary of the most important Talmudic texts on Kiddush ha-Shem. The presentation of those Talmudic texts in the *She’ilta* will be compared to some narratives and the representation of the halakhic texts in these narratives.

Session 3 ‘Ritual in Narrative’

Dr Jacqueline Borsje
University of Amsterdam
Department of Religious Studies

‘Powerful Texts for Protection and Invisibility’

There is an intricate interconnectedness between narratives and powerful texts for ritual performance. The powerful text may consist of a narrative (*historiola* or narrative charm); the powerful text may refer to a *historiola*/narrative charm or to a narrative in general; and the powerful text may have been inserted into a narrative or a narrative tradition. This paper will investigate the concept of invisibility and its relation to ritual texts for protection and invisibility. I will discuss several case studies of powerful texts inserted into a narrative (tradition) from the medieval Irish literary corpus. After an analysis of how ‘loose’ or independent powerful texts became associated with saints and their narrative tradition, I will make suggestions for a methodology on how we establish that we deal with inserted charms/powerful texts. Finally, I will suggest that we need to look at the Near East, and especially to Judaism, if we want to find paradigmatic models for the relevant protective/invisibility texts and their ritual prescriptions.

Dr Reuven Kiperwasser
Ariel University, Israel

‘Every Day Rituals, Funeral Scenes and Rabbinic Subject’

The study of rabbinic rituals usually focuses on descriptions of rituals in rabbinic literature or puts halachic texts at the center of the study, trying to reconstruct the rituals displayed in these texts. In a rather different manner, I would like, in this presentation, to analyze a few obscure aggadic narrative traditions from the Palestinian Talmud that can best be explained, if the reader is armed with some insights of ritual studies. These stories, as a rule, present not very coherent funerary scenes in which the ritualization of Jewish daily life is very whimsical and needs to be deciphered. They deal usually about the actions, spatial movements and gestures, i.e. non-verbal acts intended either to express grief or for the approval of real or imagined hierarchies. The realization that ritualization of the everyday life is a key characteristic of the rabbinic project at large, and that ritually-oriented discourse is pervasive in rabbinic texts and is not confined only to texts that describe ritual performances, opens new and compelling directions for narratological inquiry. Examining the role of rituals and ritualization in the formation of rabbinic subjectivity, and the function of rituals as forms of spiritual exercises allow the better understanding of the rabbinic culture. Moreover, reading these stories through ritualistic lenses can inform not only our understanding of rabbinic culture and ideology as reflected in these stories, but also of the production of these texts as such. I would like to show how our understanding of rabbinic storytelling would change if we think of those activities in ritual terms.

Dr Markéta Kabůrková

National Museum Archive, Prague & Ruhr-University Bochum

‘Ritual Schism in the Toldot Yeshu Narrative’

In the Toldot Yeshu literary tradition we encounter a semi-independent narrative describing final separation of the Nazarenes from the people of Israel. The story of Simeon Kepha represents – at least in some points – a parody of the Acts, similarly as the main story of Jesus is a parody of gospel narrative.

Following the death of Jesus, Israel is divided and there is an unsolvable conflict between believers in Jesus’s messiahship and the rest of the nation. Simeon Kepha pretends to be a true prophet of Nazarenes while in fact he is a double agent working towards definitive separation of heretics from the Rabbinic Judaism. The change of ritual practice, namely in management of time (festivals), principles of kashrut and bodily purity, is central medium of this way of isolation “dangerous ones in between” from the orthodox (and more importantly orthopractic) community.

The present paper intends to examine the motive of ritual change within the specific genre of polemical counter-history as the Toldot Yeshu may be labelled, while comparing various versions and developments of the narrative. For example, when reading the Wagenseil edition of Toldot Yeshu, we see the change of ritual realized in two stages of different essentials value. Despite the fact that both characters are modelled according to former Christian heroes and inverted into Jewish agents, the behaviour of Simeon Kepha is labelled as rightful and even self-sacrificial, while Elia, who only continues in implemented ritual schism, is portrayed as a false prophet and receives a Divine punishment for his activity.

Session 4 ‘Ritual and Modern Identity 1’

Adi Sherzer MA

The Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel & Zionism, Be'er Sheva

‘The National Holiday and the Jewish Rituals: The Case of Yom Ha'Atsmaut (1948-1958)’

The establishment of *Yom Ha'Atsmaut* (Israeli Independence Day) was among the first memory sites the young state had to construct. The question how to shape and infuse meaning into it occupied various thinkers and politicians in Israel and abroad throughout the 1950s. Interestingly, all seem to have shared the common assumption that the holiday must be part of the Jewish holiday cycle, for purpose of which they all reinterpreted canonical Jewish rituals, texts and traditions. In order to invent new traditions which yet provide a sense of authenticity, Jewish rituals were frequently utilized; however, in order to fit the secular *Zeitgeist* they had to be reprocessed, with their original religious crux was usually neutralized.

Thus, *Yom Ha'Atsmaut*, might shed a new light on the multi-colored relationship between the Israeli national narrative and the Jewish past. In addition, it is blurring the sharp distinctions between religion and civic- religion, and religious and secular rituals.

The holiday ceremonies, the guided folk dances, the synagogue services and the attempts to create a special *Haggadah*, all represent different methods of establishing new Israeli-Jewish traditions, as well as different interpretations of the founding myths of the state. The differences refer not only to the precise choice of traditions (biblical vs. post-biblical; exilic vs. non-exilic; transcendent vs. immanent) or to the balance they portray between "traditional-religious" and "civic-secular", but mainly to the internal structure of the compositions which they form. Methodical analysis of these historical examples uncovers two fundamental identity options or archetypes: The first is a "mixture" that seeks to keep the traditional and the civic elements neatly arrayed in parallel; the second synthesizes a new "compound" in which the elements' structure is completely transformed in order to erect new kind of national Judaism.

The debate between these two archetypes, which can still be identified in Israel today, shaped a unique holiday which is both civic and religious and serves as a perfect case study for understanding the role of national holidays in the formulation and negotiation of collective identity in nascent nation-states.

Dr Paul Michael Kurtz

Faculty of Divinity & Queens' College, Cambridge

‘Jewish or Jew-ish? Marking Boundaries of Ancient Identity in 19th Century Judaism’

In 1875, the German-Jewish Jakob Freudenthal entered the fray of a seemingly hopeless debate that had already raged eight centuries: whether the figure beyond the fragments of Eupolemus was a pagan, a Jew, a Samaritan, a Jew in pagan's clothing, a pagan collector of Jewish material, or a Samaritan interpolator of pagan writings. With this inquiry and others in his *Hellenistische Studien*, Freudenthal joined vexed debates on identity in Hellenistic Judaism: especially, who or what was Jewish or not. Indeed, Greek-speaking Judaism in the period after Alexander occupied a central place in the scientificizing study of Judaism in the 19th century, particularly in the wake of Zacharias Frankel (de Lange 2013, Dunkelgrün unpublished). While the opposition of “Judaism” and “Hellenism” became a freighted feature of major English, French, and German histories of the Jews written by at least cultural Christians in the period (Goldhill 2016), Jewish scholars also wrestled with these categories: from their boundaries through their compatibility to their relative value. As Maren Niehoff (1999) has

demonstrated in her richly textured survey, 19th-century Jewish scholarship on Alexandrian Judaism also became a stage for debating *contemporaneous* questions of acculturation, identity, and the limits of science (so also Zwiep 2008).

Fully operating yet rarely made explicit in all these 19th-century intra-Jewish discussions was what, exactly, made texts and authors Jewish or un-Jewish to begin with. In fact, the challenges in establishing such identities still remain today (Gruen 1998; Davila 2005). Through reading ancient figures like Philo, Pseudo-Philo, Aristobulus of Alexandria, Phocylides, and Pseudo-Phocylides as well as the Sibylline Oracles through the eyes of modern scholars like Frankel and Heinrich Graetz, Freudenthal and Jacob Bernays, this paper examines which criteria were used to determine who or what was Jewish and ‘un-Jewish’ in the Hellenistic world. Such implicit criteria included language (facility in Hebrew and ‘poor command’ of Greek), interpretation (faithfulness to rabbis, defense of the Halacha, elevation of still more ancient Jewish figures), and specific knowledge (the Torah, the Haggadah). As a result, this paper not only highlights the historiographical criteria for establishing Jewishness in antiquity but also further indicates the implications in contemporaneous Jewish debates on identity in the 19th century.

Dr Davide Mano

EHESS, Paris

Centre de Recherches Historiques

‘Rediscovering Jewish Rituals of Commemoration from Late 18th Century Italy: Virtual Citizenship, Positive Memory and Political Message’

The summer of 1799 marked the epilogue of the first revolutionary period in Italy. From North to South, the ancient order was restored, republican trees were pulled down and patriots fell victims of violent revenge by counter-revolutionaries. As a response to anti-Jewish threats and murders, Jewish communities took diplomatic actions and asked to regain ancient privileges and royal protections. Italian rabbis also instituted new rituals of commemoration, including nocturnal study, fasting and charity.

Different orders of prayers were established for these occasions, mostly recovering the ritual patterns of the Purim Sheni (Second Festival of Purim) tradition, the penitential practices of the Seder Tiqqun (Order of Reparation), or the edifying modes of the Limud (Torah Study). In a very short period of time (1797-1800), Italian Jewish synagogues hosted some thirty ritual services of commemoration and inaugurated new Jewish dates in local community’s calendars.

This Italian ritual tradition generally marked return to safety, building collective memory and helping overcome the trauma of violence. It was also intended to give expression to Jewish sentiments of local belonging and warm attachment to the place of residence. Even more than so, it served as a political message for the re-establishment of the community’s internal order and for the recovering of the relationships with Christian authorities.

In my proposed lecture, I will consider the importance of this Italian Jewish ritual tradition from a social and political perspective. I will also discuss some of the 19th- and 20th-century historiographical interpretations of these rituals, stemming from scholars associated with the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.

Session 5 ‘Ritual and Modern Identity 2’

Bram Colijn MA

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

‘Pluriprax Households in Modern China: Contested Family Rituals in a Shifting Religious Landscape’

This paper explores a peculiar shift in the religious landscape of modern China. During fieldwork in 2014-2016 in the region of Southern Fujian I studied how practitioners of popular religion and Protestant Christianity live together as husbands and wives, (grand-)parents and (grand-)children. I refer to them as "pluriprax households." A salient behaviour I observed among pluriprax households is abstention from the communal rituals of the religious Other. Abstention is problematic because ritual enactment has long been considered by grassroots ritualists as a way to trigger a divine response or to comply with etiquette. Since the aggressive modernization efforts of successive twentieth century Chinese governments, however, practitioners increasingly consider rituals not as etiquette but as sincere expressions of ideological or religious convictions. Which challenges does a shift to sincerity pose to Chinese ritualists on a grassroots level? And how does that further our understanding of the imposition of "religion" as a political and legal concept by modernizing Chinese states of the twentieth century? I illustrate this peculiar shift through an ethnographic example of a Protestant couple in their hometown in rural Southern Fujian during Spring Festival in 2016. As the couple alternates between abstention and participation in rituals with their parents and ancestral lineage members, we can discern tension between understandings of ritual as social obligation and as an expression of sincere religious convictions. This tension leads to three kinds of challenges for pluriprax households in Southern Fujian: 1) to enact rituals together, 2) to negotiate between individual religious piety and communal obligations, and 3) to maintain a sense of unity and solidarity despite abstaining from each other's rituals. The vignette thus illuminates the challenges faced by ordinary Chinese people due to the imposition of a modern religious field in the course of the twentieth century.

Prof. Gerard Wiegers

University of Amsterdam

Department of History

‘Ritual, Conflict, and Memory: Kristallnacht Commemorations in the Netherlands and Jewish-Muslim Relations’

This contribution is part of a wider NWO funded research project on Jewish Muslim relations in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, *Delicate Relations: Muslims and Jews in Amsterdam and London*. In that project, we also study commemorative rituals in the Netherlands related to the Holocaust, the Nakba, and Srebrenica, and their relationship with and relevance for Jewish-Muslim relations. With regard to commemorations of the Nazi persecution of the Jews and Holocaust we devote attention to several commemorative rituals: the February Strike Commemoration, the Kristallnacht commemorations (since 1992) and National Remembrance Day on 4 and 5 May. The focus of the proposed contribution will be on the two Kristallnacht commemorations. Originally, between 1992 (when the ritual was established in Amsterdam) several organizations cooperated in the organization and performance of one single event. Later, a conflict arose, and nowadays two separate, annual commemorations take place. My interest is in the ritual form as well as the relation between ritual and conflict. I will ask the following questions: How did the two rituals come into being? Who have been and are the organizers? Which main elements can we distinguish? How did these rituals develop over the years, to which factors can these developments be attributed, and what do the main discourses on

these commemorations tell us about the position of Judaism and Islam in the Netherlands in general and about (the history of) Jewish-Muslim relations in particular? In my general evaluation and theoretical approach I will build on my earlier empirical and theoretical work on ritual and conflict (e.g. Robert Langer, Thomas Quartier, Udo Simon, Jan Snoek and Gerard Wiegers, 'Ritual as a source of conflict', in R.L. Grimes, U. Hüsken, U. Simon & E. Venbrux (Eds.): *Ritual, media, and conflict* (Oxford ritual studies series, 3) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 93-132).

Martijn Stoutjesdijk MA
Tilburg School of Catholic Theology

'Judaism, Slavery and Transfer of Ritual: from Seder Meal to Keti Koti'

Judaism and slavery in the (Early) Modern Dutch history are connected in a paradoxical way. Jewish merchants played an important role in the initial stages of the Dutch Transatlantic slavery and are sometimes accused of having contributed disproportionately to its growth. As a matter of fact, one of the first documented slaves on Dutch territory was a Jewish slave, property of Jewish masters (the slave Eliezer). On the other hand, Jews and (descendants of) slaves sometimes find each other in a shared history of being victim of violence, oppression and discrimination. In light of this, the phenomenon of the Keti Koti Dialogue Tables is of particular interest. The Keti Koti Dialogue Tables are an invention of the Surinamese Mercedes Zandwijken, herself a descendant of slaves, and the Dutch Jew Machiel Kestra. The Keti Koti Dialogue Tables are meant to commemorate the Dutch role in the Transatlantic slavery by bringing together descendants of slaves and white Dutchmen. In the past five years Keti Koti Dialogue Tables have been organized at different places in the Netherlands and up to 5000 persons have participated in the Tables. The Keti Koti Dialogue Tables are explicitly inspired by the Jewish Seder meal. As in the Seder meals questions are asked (why are we here tonight?), symbolic food is eaten and songs are sung. In my paper I will study the Keti Koti Dialogue Tables against the background of the Seder meal through the theoretical lens of 'transfer of ritual' (Langer e.a. 2006). With the help of other special-purpose *haggadot* (manuals for the Seder meal), for i.e. the Shoa, the LGBTQ community and 'earth justice', I will show that the Seder meal forms a particular useful locus for experiencing and sharing feelings of hope for peace, justice, inclusiveness and dialogue.

Session 6 ‘Ritual Theory 1’

Dr William Arfman
Tilburg University

‘A History of Liminality: Plurality and the Problem of the Liminoid’

Although liminality is generally considered a somewhat outdated concept in contemporary ritual studies, the concept is quickly gaining prominence in such diverse fields as political anthropology, cultural studies and international relations. In these newer iterations of studying the ‘betwixt and between’, the focus lies less on ideas like *communitas* and more on problematic processes of transition. The claim here is that liminality is perfectly suited as a central concept for studying liquid modernity, superdiversity and similar dimensions of our quickly globalizing world (c.f Thomassen 2014). In other words, the concept of liminality promises to provide us with the perfect tool for studying pluralistic contexts.

However, if we look at the historical biography of liminality as a concept, we come across a problem. When Turner started applying his ideas about liminality to Western cultural practices (Turner 1974) he actively avoided labeling them as liminal, coining the term liminoid instead. Unlike real liminal practices, found in small-scale tribal societies, these experiences were optional and unable to effect actual transformation. Western culture had lost touch with authentic liminality.

What this paper aims to do is to conduct a small historiographic study of the concept of liminality that pays special attention to the role of choice and the possibility of transition, asking whether (and how) the concept can help us understand ritual transitions in pluralized settings where transition itself has become problematic or even permanent. Some recent cases of rituality related to the European migration crisis will be used to illustrate both the challenges and the opportunities involved.

Prof. Ab de Jong
Leiden University
Leiden University Centre for the Study of Religion

‘What Zoroastrianism Lacks (and What that Means, and Why Everyone Should Care)’

The study of religion has so far failed to integrate (or connect) systematic explanatory or even descriptive proposals for the big category ‘religion’ with the disparate one of actually existing ‘religions’. One of the responses to this failure has been the loud and persistent call to remove *both* from our inventory of research interests. This call is supported by an uncritical and undertheorized use of the twin accusations of *essentialism* and the *protestant bias* (itself ironically a shockingly essentialist concept). This paper will argue that the former of these accusations (the evil of essentialism) is intellectually vacuous, and that the latter (the protestant bias) does not correspond to any historically traceable reality. The paper will address these issues through a particular and unusual lens: an inventory of things Zoroastrianism does *not* have (congregational worship – religious virtuosi – martyrdom – food laws), even after more than two millennia of exchange and coexistence with communities that have made these aspects central to the practice of their religions.

Dr Nathal Delsing

Leiden University

Leiden University Centre for the Study of Religion

‘Setting Oneself Apart? Ritual Practice in Pluralistic Contexts’

In this paper I will revisit Mary Douglas’s *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* to explore if her grid-group typology can still help us understand under what circumstances it becomes important for a religious group in a pluralistic society to maintain boundaries, develop a clear distinction between insiders and outsiders, define personal identity in terms of group belonging or, by contrast, under what circumstances there are fewer or more individualistic rituals and setting oneself apart becomes less important. I will take dress codes and the ritual of male circumcision as a starting point. My main argument will be that the degree and style of ritual among religious groups in pluralistic societies is, as Mary Douglas argued, correlated to social structure, ways of being in the world, and particularly notions of the body and the self. However the importance of distinguishing oneself, of upholding a minority identity, and setting oneself apart through ritual practice, becomes more pertinent in certain pluralistic contexts than in others.

Session 7 ‘Art/Drama 1’

Elza Kuyk MA

Utrecht University & Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Faculty of Theology

‘Is there Liturgy in Contemporary Art Performances?’

The Oude Kerk in Amsterdam invites not only artists to present site specific work in the church building, but also performers and scholars are asked to respond to the exhibitions. Performances in the series “Come Closer” are meant to be intimate ceremonies and seem to become of increasing importance to the programme that is offered. The language in which exhibitions and performances are presented show that religious references are not only allowed but quite actively lived out and claimed. At a recent symposium 21st June 2018 the curator and a theologian even swept roles: the first quoting biblical texts and referring to Christian tradition(s), the second elaborating liturgy in the context of art history. However, while the space of the church building is the same, the audiences, participation and repertoire differ between a church service and art performances.

An exercise in analysing two of the art performances might help us answer the question whether it would be helpful to understand them as forms of liturgy. Or would that be an unnecessary comparison? Art could as well remain art, but maybe performative programmes come close to what is performed in liturgy in its intended effect. Maybe it is liturgy that can be understood differently.

Two performances will be reviewed: one of a performance in a series called “Silence”, regularly on an early Friday morning (8-9 AM) and one of a performance Come Closer #3, called “Are you ready to die?”, 16th March 2018, related to Christian Boltanski’s NA.

Levi Weinstein MA

Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Be'er Sheva

‘Hasidic Legal Drama therapy. Jewish Ritual as Therapeutic Legal Norms at the Interface between Performance and Psychotherapy’

Therapeutic Jurisprudence (TJ) is a field of inquiry, which brings the role of law as a therapeutic agent into focus. TJ theory analyses legal rules, procedures and the practices and techniques of legal actors, to ascertain the law’s potential therapeutic or anti-therapeutic impact on the psychological and emotional well-being of justice system participants. The TJ movement advances policy and practice that will enhance therapeutic outcomes, underscoring psychological well-being as an objective of the law. Legal norms are the performance of legal constructions by participants in the legal system. Performance Studies investigate the transformational opportunities which rite and ritual provide. I suggest that legal norms are in essence rites and rituals which are imbued with meaning by the legal system and the culture to which they belong.

Practitioners of Drama Therapy, which is the intentional use of Theatrical tools in the service of psychotherapy, often incorporate manipulations of culturally significant symbols and rituals within the therapeutic encounter. Thus, the use of legal norms as therapy could possibly come under the umbrella of Drama Therapy as well as TJ.

Judaism is considered a "nomocentric" religion, in that it posits legal norms that govern virtually all adherents' behaviors as its cardinal form of worship. Hasidic thinkers give precedence to psychological re-interpretations of the mystical processes of the legal system. Within the Hasidic movement, the seven generations of the prolific HaBaD school afford ample material to research their mystical jurisprudence of the *Mitzwot*.

HaBaD's cosmology and eschatology deal extensively with the dynamic relationship between the transcendental aspect of the Divine, and the immanent aspect of the Divine. The *mitzwot* are seen as a dressing, or costume, for the encompassing light, itself ungraspable. In HaBaD discourse the abstract transcendental aspect can be channeled directly by the non-discursive ritual action of the commandments. The later HaBaD masters further developed the psychological interpretation of worship as both ethical work and as playfulness. The practical performance of *mitzwot* contains the efficacy to transvalue mundane corporeality, imbuing the physical realm with spiritual meaning –thus embodying the messianic mindset, characterized by a simultaneous awareness of the multiple registers, achieving the messianic objective of HaBaD's theology.

This state of being can be understood in light of Winnicott's conceptualization of play. It is through the capacity to play that the infant can create a potential space in which it can meet and communicate with an Other. Winnicott posits the psychological necessity of play both as an initial development stage as well as throughout life. Winnicott's seminal theories informed Performance Studies' concept of the actor's "not-me/not-not-me" construct, which applies the characteristics of the play object to the theatrical or ritual actor. Embodying his role, the actor is simultaneously himself yet not himself. Similarly the legal performer in HaBaD's jurisprudence channels abstract Divinity by transmuting the mundane through performed legal norms, converting his reality into a Winnicottian potential space.

Thus, performance of legal norms transports the performer into a playful state, which affects psychological individuation, considered 'personal redemption'. Hence the performance of *mitzwot* is thought to bring about the therapeutic result of an integrated self, capable of mature relationships with others.

Hadas Reshef MA

Freie Universität Berlin
Institut für Judaistik

‘Interpreting Rituals: Three Initial Activities of Modern Preoccupation with Jewish Art’

For the first time, Jewish ritual objects were displayed as cultural and aesthetic exhibits during the Paris 1878 Exposition Universelle. The world's fair exhibitions were part of characterization and differentiation of nations and cultures, and it was the items from a private collection, the collection of the composer Isaac Strauss, that was represented the Jews. The first exhibition of Jewish artists was opened in 1901, during the fifth Zionist Congress in Basel. One of its organizers, the philosopher Martin Buber, made a historical speech about Jewish art. He stressed the great importance art education has in affirming and recognizing ourselves and our cultural treasure, as well as the role of artistic research, which offers rich themes to emerging artists in all creative areas. In the Pale of Settlement, Shloyme Zaslavsky, better known as a writer by his pen name S. An-sky, was a pioneer of ethnographic research of Jewish folk art. An-sky saw the scientific collecting of Jewish materials of historical value as a means to prevent the alienation of Jews who cut themselves off from their cultural roots in times of assimilation. He advocated the creation of knowledge that would make possible new forms of Jewish Identity.

These three examples demonstrate a modern approach in which presentations and preoccupations with Jewish arts, have used as a formative tool both inward to bring assimilated Jews closer to their heritage, as well as outwards, as a political tool of a minority group and against Antisemitism. While analyzing the particular historical, cultural, geographical and political circumstances in which those three initial engagements with Jewish art had been executed, I wish to stress that those activities, as well as the scientific research itself, are cultural phenomena that need to be considered and interpreted as customs and rituals.

Session 8 ‘Ritual Model, Ritual Disruption and the Beginning of Christianity’

Dr Thomas Blanton

Research Fellow, Universität Erfurt
Max-Weber-Kolleg für kultur- und sozialwissenschaftliche Studien

‘Abraham as Ritual Model in Genesis, Jubilees, and Pauline Epistles’

The paper examines narratives from the Hebrew Bible, the book of Jubilees, and the epistles of Paul of Tarsus that deploy the figure of Abraham as a ritual model in order to complicate what classicist Matthew Roller has identified as a “loop of social reproduction” entailed in the use of models and exempla in ancient Mediterranean cultures. The paper will explore the ways in which much more than social reproduction is involved in the use of ancient examples, understood as guides to subsequent behavior; even in cases in which ancient exemplary figures such as Abraham are invoked to legitimize subsequent practices, significant aspects of cultural innovation may be present, as the significance of the model is reinterpreted within diverse historical and cultural situations.

Dr Karin Neutel

University of Oslo

‘Ritual Disruption: Circumcision as a Rite of Exclusion and Inclusion at the Beginning and End of Christianity’

One of the objections raised against male circumcision in recent legal debates is that it functions as a rite of religious inclusion, for Muslims and Jews. Non-circumcision, on the other hand, is seen as religiously neutral and therefore preferable. This view seems to be informed by a particular Christian perspective on circumcision, which can ultimately be traced back to interpretations of Paul. This paper will explore Paul’s message about male circumcision in this light, and see it as a case of ritual disruption, which functions as an informant on the notions of inclusion and exclusion of its cultural context. Doing so shows that the disruptiveness of Paul’s message does not stem from a distinctive understanding of circumcision as such, or from a uniquely inclusive attitude, as is often assumed. This finding can challenge contemporary assumptions about inclusion and exclusion in relation to circumcision and religion.

Session 9 ‘Ritual Theory 2’

Dr Tamás Biró

ELTE Eötvös Loránd University & Jewish Theological Seminary - University of Jewish Studies,
Budapest

‘Modes of Religiosity and the History of Jewish Rituals’

Lawson and McCauley (1990) developed a formalism, inspired by Chomskyan syntax, describing the participant structure of a religious ritual. Based on this approach, they propose in their 2002 book a theory of how a balanced ritual system should look like, including both frequent, low-arousal, special-patient/special-instrument rituals, and infrequent, high-arousal, special-agent rituals. Whitehouse expands this idea further into the “modes theory of religiosity”. Both McCauley and Lawson (2002) and Whitehouse (2004) build on Whitehouse’s earlier fieldwork observing a splinter-group within a cargo cult in Papua New Guinea, which illustrates how the two kinds of ritual systems, or the two modes of religiosity clash.

Earlier, I have argued (Biró 2013) that traditional rabbinic Judaism lacks special-agent rituals, if we adhere strictly to the definition of Lawson and McCauley. In fact, this statement is only true for the theologically (halakhically) correct representation of the rituals, from which popular interpretations might diverge. Still, I suggest that mainstream Judaism has always maintained an unbalanced ritual system, which is predicted by the McCauley-Lawson model to exhibit the “tedium effect”, and to lead to the emergence of a “splinter group” (in a technical sense). In my talk, I shall demonstrate how various developments in the history of Jewish rituals fit into this scheme. Most notably, both the Hasidic tish and the changing role of the rabbi in the non-orthodox world will be presented as attempts in a pluralistic context by an unbalanced ritual system to introduce more special-agent rituals.

Thommy Cowan MA

University of Amsterdam
Department of Religious Studies

‘Storm the Citadels: Archontism and the Resistance to Secularized Ritual’

The paper intends to: 1) define ‘archontism’; 2) explore how technological and scientific innovation helped shape archontist ritual practice and worldview; 3) demonstrate that the archons act as a bridge between ‘nature’ and the ‘supernatural,’ thus necessitating both natural and supernatural ritual components; however, ‘natural’ ritual innovations often encounter resistance from orthodox practitioners who often rely primarily on ‘supernatural’ understandings. The paper’s primary case studies will be a diachronic analysis of the rituals of Zosimos of Panopolis (fl. ~300 CE) and Beat writer William Burroughs (20th cen.).

First, the paper will define ‘archontism,’ which is an abstracted\de-historicized form of the term “archontic Gnosticism,” used by classicist Kyle Fraser. It will be shown that ‘archontism’ is diverse, yet consists of reliable features: 1) the material universe is an illusory prison; 2) the masters of the illusory prison are agentified forces of nature called “archons”; 3) the archons actively resist attempts to transcend the illusion.

Secondly, the paper will discuss how scientific innovations influence the ritual philosophies of archontists. For example, the confluence of Egyptian chemical artisanship and Greek natural philosophy in the Hellenic world led to new ‘scientific’ theories of the transmutation of matter, eventually developing into “alchemy.” Zosimos argued that rigorous laboratory methods were a necessary innovation to alchemy in order to subvert the archons’ attempts to disrupt chemical transmutation. Additionally, Burroughs used discoveries in neurology to argue for a ‘scientific’ view of magic and

gnosis: manipulating the brain at a cellular level allows one to transcend demiurgic imprisonment, an approach he called “neuromancy.”

Lastly, the historiographical component of the paper will show that ritual innovators incorporating scientific methods and/or concepts often act as historians of ritual themselves. Primarily, Burroughs’ defenses of the “cut-up” technique against contemporary criticism developed into a historical reimagining of ritual which situates all forms of art as magical.

Mark Beumer MA

Tilburg University

‘Temple Sleep: a Close Encounter of Ritual Dynamics. An Historiographic Exploration’

Temple sleep is a pagan ritual which can be divided in a oracular and therapeutic variant. In my research therapeutic temple sleep forms the main case. This ritual aims to heal the sick of their ailments by performing certain rites like initiation (fasting, offering), sleeping (incubatio) and thanks offerings. This healing ritual has spread through the Greco-Roman world, until the rise of Christianity, which Christianized this ritual. In literature, there is only spoken of the interaction between the Greco-Roman world and Christianity. The Jewish roots of Christian rituals are often forgotten.

It is this ritual dynamics that has now been evolved into a new academic discipline (2002, 2008) which looks at rituals in a completely different way. Various disciplines like History, Theology, Sociology, Classics, Anthropology and Psychology are looking at the dynamics of ritual, together with their own models and themes. Until now there has never been a historiographic analysis that examines all the disciplines and their view on ritual dynamics.

I argue that for a complete analysis of ritual dynamics a pluralistic view is necessary to construct a highly trustworthy image of a certain ritual. Historiographical knowledge is essential for ritual scholars. Without one will wander through the dark. I will take ritual dynamics and temple sleeps as examples from a historiographic perspective, using authors like Catherine Bell, Jens Kreinath and Angelos Chaniotis, Gil Renberg and Mary Hamilton.

Session 10 ‘Art/Drama 2’

Dr Megan Blocksom

Baldwin Wallace University, Berea, Ohio
Department of Art and Art History

‘The Rhetoric of Religious Rituals: 17th Century Dutch Processional Imagery in an Increasingly Secular Context’

The limited scholarship on the topic of religious ritualistic imagery in the Northern Netherlands often assumes that Catholic processions ceased to exist following the adoption of Calvinism as the official, state-sanctioned religion and the rise of secular authorities. However, the pictorial evidence, contemporary written accounts, and ongoing criticisms of Catholic customs suggest that such processions continued to be staged with varying degrees of frequency throughout the seventeenth century. Though not impervious to the legislation enacted against them, some religious processional rituals adapted to the demands of the dominant Protestant religious order. Ironically, the contested nature of certain processions may have made them more appealing subjects to both artists and patrons.

Using visual, textual and archival evidence, this paper seeks to create a broader picture of the possible functions of and meanings encoded in early modern Dutch depictions of religious processions, with a particular focus on those staged for Twelfth Night and Shrovetide. Artists such as Rembrandt, Jan Steen and Adriaen van de Venne produced images of these festive rituals for a middleclass market. Often intimate in scale and subject, they register the persistence of Catholic customs in the Northern Netherlands and visually reinforce the local communal and neighborhood ties that such traditions encouraged. A central contention of this paper is that the representation of religious processions could function as a rhetorical strategy for the modeling of broader social values. In the wake of evolving religious traditions, such imagery evoked variable meanings for an increasingly pluriform Dutch society.

Dr Francesco Trentini

Ca’ Foscari University, Venezia
Department of Humanities (DSU)

‘Beyond Stereotypes. Jewish Ritual Influencing Christian Liturgical Imagery’

A main topic in the study of circumcision is the increasing importance of blood mixed with wine in the liturgy of circumcision starting from rabbinic Judaism. As is well known, Lawrence A. Hoffman interprets its relevance as a response to the christian ritual of Eucharist, while David Biale reads it as a sign of the conflation of the blood of the circumcised with that of covenant in respect of the heart of Judaism. What is sure is that the cup of wine in which the mohel used to add a few drops of the circumcised blood became a feature of jewish liturgy.

With the help of two case studies, the present paper aims to show how the peculiar stress on blood in western circumcision liturgy at the beginning of the Modern Age had a surprising influence on christian liturgical imagery, overturning, in a sense, the idea that only Christianity played a role in the development of Jewish ritual but not the opposite. We will see how, in contexts of strong, even if conflictual, Jewish-Christian negotiation as were late XV century Nuremberg and XVI century Ferrara, both Albrecht Durer and Ludovico Mazzolino produced original representations of the *Circumcision of Christ* painting a great amount of details concerning Jewish circumcision rite (the *sandak* holding the child on his knees, the chair of Elijah, the so called *Jüdischkerze* in the *shammash*’s hands...), with a main focus on the cup of wine.

Far from being sort of folklorical cameos or just a form of anti-Jewish manifesto, these images, as grounded on a knowledge of the sacrificial meaning attributed to blood and wine in circumcision rite

by rabbinic tradition, hint at how, in the studied peculiar contexts, the Jewish ritual stimulated a new way of thinking the child Christ's blood in christian groups.

Dr Miriam Sklarz

Orot Israel College, Rehovot
Advanced Studies in Bible and Oral Law

‘Three Rituals Attributed to Melchizedek: Rabbinic, Christian & Polemic’

The Biblical figure of Melchizedek appears suddenly and briefly (and quite mysteriously) after Abram's victory over the four kings as mentioned in Gen. 14 18-20: "And Melchizedek the king of Salem brought out bread and wine, and he was a priest to the Most High God. And he blessed him, and he said, 'Blessed be Abram to the Most High God, Who possesses heaven and earth. And blessed be the Most High God, Who has delivered your adversaries into your hand', and he gave him a tithe from all."

During this short encounter, Melchizedek and Abram exchange gifts and gestures: bread and wine, a blessing, and a tithe. Being the first priest mentioned in the bible, Melchizedek's offerings were seen in the course of biblical interpretation throughout the ages as hinting to or as establishing various aspects of the priestly ritual. Some of these rituals are still practiced today in Judaism and Christianity, in Israel and in the Diaspora.

This lecture will present three central aspects of rituals that have been attributed to Melchizedek in Rabbinic Midrash, Christian literature and art, and in Jewish Medieval polemics (both overt and covert). We will show that the various exegetical approaches deliberately focused on diverse aspects of Melchizedek's gifts and interpreted them as different rituals according to their religious needs and beliefs.

Session 11 ‘Rituals in Antiquity’

Dr Maureen Attali

l'Université Rennes 2

‘The Jewish Depositio of Jacob and David in 6th Century Hebron: Christian Misunderstanding or First Testimony of a Newer Jewish Ritual?’

Several of the festivals and rituals attributed to ancient Jewish communities are only mentioned in exogenous – mostly Roman, Greek, and Christian – source material. They are rarely addressed in academia: at best, their study occupies a few pages – sometimes a mere footnote – within a paper or a book that deals with a broader topic.

Such is the case with the enigmatic festival that, according to an anonymous mid-VIth century Christian author known as the Piacenza pilgrim, commemorated the burial of two biblical figures, Jacob and King David, at the enclosure built over the site identified as the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron. The reliability of this testimony and its meaning are disputed among the few scholars who tackled it. Since it has no parallel in contemporary rabbinic sources, some hold that the non-Jewish writer was sorely mistaken and invented a ritual that never was by drawing on Christian funerary practices. On the opposite, John Wilkinson interpreted this short note as a major proof of an inherently Jewish cult that predated the Christian one but was sternly disapproved by rabbinic authorities. To overrun this quandary, I seek to evaluate the hypothesis of a Jewish Depositio by comparing it to other local Jewish festivals of Antiquity and by trying to piece together the use of incense and lamps in Jewish liturgy outside of the Jerusalem Temple against the cultural backdrop of commemorations of death and burial during the Roman period.

While no definite conclusion may be reached regarding this specific festival, this case-study should underline how the history of liturgy could benefit from the consideration of incidental and exogenous material to supplement normative Jewish literary sources.

Prof. Peter-Ben Smit

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Faculty of Religion and Theology, Texts and Traditions

‘Ritual Competition and Ritual Failure in Philo's *De vita contemplativa*’

One of the challenges of the study of ritual is to move beyond ‘typical’ rituals (e.g., circumcision, ritual cleansing, ritual slaughter, etc.), i.e.: to also consider every day, yet regulated practices, such as meals, as rituals. This can shed considerable light on their functioning, for instance with regard to their role in creating groups (and outsiders) and group identities and the kind of meaning making to which they invite. Meals are of particular interest, given that they exist both in ‘clearly’ ritual varieties and ‘common’ ones, which, however, can be no less ritual. This paper focuses on the role of meals in Philo's *De Vita Contemplativa* (i.e. his treatise on the *Therapeutes*) and considers the extensive discussion of the meal of the *Therapeutes* and Plato's (i.e. Socrates') *Symposium* in chs. 40-90, occupying a very significant portion of the book. The body of theory around ‘ritual failure’, as developed by Grimes and Hüsken, will be used to analyze this ‘competition’ between meals as a ‘competition’ in rituals, thereby shedding new light on the manner in which Philo seeks to uphold the virtues of the *Therapeutes* and to discredit Greek philosophical tradition (and culture at large, it seems). Key to the notion of ritual failure is that only when a ritual goes awry, the meanings ascribed to it by participants and the anticipated effect of a ritual become clear. In this way, it will be argued that, rather than being a mere description of two meals, one positively and one pejoratively, Philo in fact engages in the construction of a failed (i.e.

Platonic) ritual and in that light actively constructs the meaning of the meals of the *Therapeutes*. In addition, it will be suggested, on the basis of the fact that meals functioned as symbolic micro-societies in the ancient world, that Philo also engages in a rather sweeping exercise of social criticism, both when it comes to the manner in which people treat each other and when it comes to their patterns of consumption (ascetic food of the *Therapeutes*). In doing so, the paper goes beyond extant research that stresses Philo's creativity in his treatment of the meals much less.

Kristel Henquet

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam & Leiden University

‘Offering Body Parts: Dedicating Terracotta Anatomical Votives in Hellenistic Central Italy’

In the course of the 18th, 19th and 20th century thousands of terracotta feet, legs, hands, arms, heads, eyes, ears, breasts, penises, hearts, intestines, wombs and other body parts were excavated from the Italic soil in the central part of the peninsula: remnants of ritual practices dating from Hellenistic times. The phenomenon of dedicating terracotta anatomical votives to the Italic gods cumulated in the third and second centuries BCE, after which the objects were mostly buried in votive deposits in the ground, the individual experience of their dedicants sealed off in communal pits hidden for centuries.

At first these votives were seen by scholars as being of low value, both because of their cheap fabric – baked clay – and humble appearance – aesthetically inferior to the splendid sculptures and monumental temples which were also being (re)discovered during these centuries. Only a handful of doctors was interested in the terracotta anatomicals, mostly because of what the objects could tell about the knowledge of medicine in Roman times. Under the aegis of post-processual archaeology in the 1970s and 1980s there was a renewed interest in clay votives, as they were considered products of the non-elite masses, giving insight in daily religious life. From that moment the anatomical votives were studied within the frameworks of Roman expansion, gender, and perception of the body in antiquity.

After almost half a century of ongoing debates on these topics, it is time for a reassessment of the material: do we dare to look further? Can we attempt to catch glimpses of rituals which were preceded by the deposition of the votives? Can we think about who made them, who bought them, from where and to where they travelled? Were they carried in processions, how were they positioned in sanctuaries, did they make noise? New theories, like lived religion and sensual religion, could help in a quest for answers to these questions. What happens when we try to apply these theories to the case of the Hellenistic terracotta anatomical votives in Central Italy?

Session 12 'Transformation of Ritual'

Agata Rejowska-Pasek MA

Jagiellonian University, Krakow

The Institute of Sociology

'Between Ritual and Performance. Humanist Marriages in Poland'

In Poland, humanist weddings are a relatively new phenomenon (the first marriage was conducted in 2007), however their popularity is still growing. The Polish context is interesting, taking into account the fact that sociologists of religion notice religious practices are for Poles "an element of identification that is more important than faith" [Borowik 2001]. Thus, the emergence of alternative for religious rites, could be treated as herald of the socio-cultural change.

So far, the described phenomenon has been analyzed through the prism of various theories of ritual. The aim of paper is to show, that the analytical category of "ritual" perhaps is not the most appropriate for analysis such hybrid phenomenon as humanist marriages. Most of classical theories of ritual emphasizes, that it is "stereotyped" or "sequestered" [Turner 1977], "homeostatic" [Goody 1986] and repetitive [Leach 1972]. Numerous classic anthropological studies [Goody 1986; Evans-Pritchard 1937; Assmann 1992] showed also that the ritual "stands on guard" of social order, often protects the status quo and supports the current institutional order. The preliminary research revealed, however, that analyzed marriage ceremonies are strongly individualized. It should be also noted that the old forms (e.g., preserved structure of rite of passage) are filled by new, alternative contents (e.g., love is declared by phrases such as "long-lasting as possible" and not by "until death do us part"). The emergence of secular alternative could be also the manifestation of resistance to hegemony (e.g., the Roman Catholic Church or heteronormative culture). Most of the latest anthropological works emphasize that "performance undermines tradition and creates fields of searching for new, different structures and patterns of behavior" [Carlson 2004]). Therefore, in this paper I suggest, that the "social performance", which I understand following Jeffrey Alexander as "the social process by which actors, individually or in concert, display for others the meaning of their social situation" [Alexander 2006]), perhaps is more appropriate analytical category. It is worth mentioning however, that "all performance has at its core a ritual action" [Schechner 1987] and „all ritual has at its core a performative act" [Alexander 2006]. Therefore, ritual and performance exist on the same continuum and the difference between them is "a matter of variation, not fundamental type" [Alexander 2006].

The analysis is based on the quality research (expert interviews with masters of ceremony, narrative interviews with young couples, qualitative content analysis of gathered material e.g., oaths or speeches and participant observations of humanist marriage ceremonies) which has been conducted in Poland since 2016.

Prof. Wouter van Beek

Africa Studies Centre Leiden, Leiden University

‘African Masks in Changing Contexts. General Ritual?’

Few objects are as evidently ‘ritual’ as African masks, and of few objects the interpretation is as tricky as of these very masks. Many splendidly illustrated books have been published on African masks, but what these objects actually ‘do’ in rituals has been under researched. As part of a larger project of understanding African mask rituals, this presentation aims to look at recent developments in African masquerades in changing situations.

Three issues will be addressed. First, in what ritual contexts do masks usually operate and what does that imply for their interpretation? Second, what ecological contexts are conducive to rituals-cum-masks, so in what kind of societies do masks tend to surface?

That will us bring to our focus of this conference, since we perceive masks in present-day Africa to appear in quite different surroundings, like cities. There they feature in rituals which do have their roots in non-urban settings, but they are transformed and serve for different purposes and with varying effects. Masks and – at least some of – their rituals seem to travel rather well, beyond their ethnic and rural confines, even appearing in Africa-in-diaspora. The surprising link between Cuba and the Cross River region in Nigeria may serve as an example.

In a more general fashion, this case serves as an example how a rather specific category of rituals, those relying on power objects, may be interpreted and how they adapt to changing contexts.

Dr Leon Mock

Tilburg School of Catholic Theology
Department of Biblical Sciences and Church History

‘The Evil Spirit and the Washing of the Hand in Contemporary Rabbinic Responsa’

The washing of hands is a ritual done for different reasons; from modern man who washes his hands mostly for hygienic precaution, to Antiquity is which the washing of hands is usually done in a more religious context. In early Rabbinic Judaism the washing of the hands is done on several occasions – after rising in the morning, prior to eating a meal, after finishing a meal and prior to the uttering of the ‘Grace after the Meal’, after bloodletting, a haircut, or cutting one’s nails. In medieval Judaism other washings are added: after entering a privy, sexual intercourse, visiting a graveyard or touching a corpse. Some of these washings are connected in rabbinic texts to notions of some Evil Spirit – Ruakh Ra’ah – that rests in certain places or parts of the body, or are somehow connected to certain activities. These washings are codified in Rabbinic codices like the Shulkhan Arukh (16th century), the Kitzur Shulkhan Arukh (19th century) and its commentaries.

But, what happens to the concept of the Evil Spirit in these modern texts? Does the term still occurs frequently, or has it disappeared, or been reinterpreted? Perhaps the ritual persist without being associated with these magical-demonic notions, or it is reinterpreted by framing it in a new context and linked with new reasons for its performance. These questions will be answered by my research done on almost 200 orthodox response that were written between 1945 and 2000.

Session 13 ‘Liturgy 1’

Prof. Benedikt Kranemann

Universität Erfurt
Theologischen Forschungskolleg

‘Liturgy as a Church Performance. Paradigms of Liturgical Studies in the 19th Century’

The 19th century witnessed an upsurge in liturgical studies in the Catholic Church. There are large manuals. Monographs and journals deal with issues of liturgy. The formation of the priests will be reformed accordingly. "Liturgik" becomes part of the study of theology. All this is connected with great commitment to an intensification of the liturgical formation of the faithful. The discourses are characterized both by the Catholic Enlightenment of the early 19th century and by the ecclesiastical restoration of the later century. However, the boundaries are not always sharp. The paper will ask what are the crucial paradigms of liturgical science in the 19th century? Which idea of church play a role?

Prof. Gerard Rouwhorst

Tilburg University

‘The Scholarly Study of Liturgy: From Modernist Interests to 21st Century Methodology’

As a continuation of the upsurge which had started in the nineteenth century, especially in the Catholic Church in German, the scholarly interest in liturgy further increased in the twentieth century. It was closely connected with the Liturgical Movements which, in various churches, strived at reforms of liturgical traditions. Since the last few decades of the twentieth century, the influence of non-theological disciplines (social sciences; cultural and ritual studies) became stronger and this gave rise to new approaches and research questions.

Prof. Judith Frishman

Leiden University
Leiden University Centre for the Study of Religion

‘Elbogen, Liturgy and the Historiography of the *Wissenschaft de Judentums*’

Rabbi Dr. Ismar Elbogen (1874-1943), graduate of Breslau University, was appointed as a *privat dozent* at the *Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin in 1902. He is best known for his studies on liturgy, synthesized in *Der jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (1913) – a seminal work that remains relevant today. Additionally he wrote several historical works including *Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* (1935) and *A Century of Jewish Life* (1844). Elbogen claims that his liturgical studies are objective and that he has refrained from involvement in the liturgical debates and reforms of his times. This paper is a preliminary attempt to challenge his claims by situating his liturgical studies within the larger framework of a selection of his historical writings and the historiographical context of the approach of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.

Session 14 ‘Hinduism 1: Asia’

Objects used in cults, rituals and sacred ceremonies are also of a utilitarian nature: not only are they material things, they are also devices. As mediatory devices they are employed as a means for empowering communication channels between the realms of the sacred and the profane. In worship, veneration and meditation such objects are given a symbolic meaning that transcends their immediate materiality and practical purposes. Taking our cue from research on material religion, material culture and ritual studies this panel focuses on the dynamic interrelations between objects, ritual and belief. It explores how religion happens through physical encounters between human bodies, sensual objects, ritual dynamics, sacred space, and symbolic materiality.

With a focus on south Asia we present the following topics:

Dr Tineke Nugteren

Tilburg University
Tilburg School of Humanities and Digital Sciences
Department of Culture Studies

‘Bare Feet and Sacred Ground: Viṣṇu Was Here’

The core of this presentation consists of a closer look at ritualized behavior around a particular type of divine feet: the imprint of a deity’s foot in natural rock. South Asia’s topography is brimming with such material traces of epic heroes, Hindu gods, Buddha’s footsteps and even footprints of the prophet Muhammad. Special attention is given to the Viṣṇupāda at Gayā, India, where the imprint of Viṣṇu’s right foot forms a natural ensemble with an ‘immortal’ banyan tree, a river and a circle of hills.

Dr Catrien Notermans

Radboud University Nijmegen
COAS/ Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology

‘Prayers Made of Cow Dung’

Each year, on a specific day during the Hindu festival of Diwali, women all over rural North India knead sculptures out of large quantities of fresh cow-dung. The ritual is known as the *Govardhan puja* (worship of Mount Govardhan) and relates to Indian people’s worship of Lord Krishna and the natural environment this god inhabits. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in three rural villages adjoining the city of Udaipur, it is argued that in moulding the fertile material of cow- dung, women express that humans, gods, and non-human agents (land, water, animals) need to collaborate to produce fertile environments and fecund lives.

Deborah de Koning MA

Tilburg University

Department of Culture Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Digital Science

‘Celebrating the Nation: Ritualizing Ravana’

In post-war Sri Lanka Ravana is exalted as the most famous king of Lanka – in this context equated with Sri Lanka. The imaginations of an ancient indigenous civilization with Ravana as the most famous king also enters the ritual sphere: from 2013 onwards two rituals from Ravana have been annually organized by the Sri Devram Maha Viharaya (a Buddhist community in one of the suburbs of Colombo). My focus will be on the objects taken around in the annual procession organized by this particular temple.

Session 15 ‘Spatial Arrangements and Foci of Ritual in Antiquity’

How do spatial arrangements and specific objects help to structure rituals and give them a focus? This general question is applied in a comparative manner to very different bodies of evidence from ancient Judaism, Etruscan, and Greco-Roman religion. The participants from Leiden and Erfurt have been working together within the framework of the research centre on “Dynamics of rituals in multi-religious contexts” and the doctoral programme “Resonant self-world relationships in socio-religious practices” at the Max Weber Centre Erfurt and invite a broad inter-disciplinary discussion.

Prof. Jürgen K. Zangenberg

Leiden University

Leiden University Institute of History & the Leiden University Center for the Arts in Society

‘Exploring the Bemah in the Byzantine Synagogue of Horvat Kur’

During excavations conducted by Kinneret Regional Project in the Late Roman-Byzantine synagogue at Horvat Kur (Galilee) (www.kinneret-excavations.org), various fragments of what appears to have been a two-phase platform-like structure came to light attached to the southern synagogue wall. The location and design of these subsequent platforms suggest that they might have represent two phases of the *bemah*, the stone-built support of a wooden chest that housed the Torah scrolls and formed the liturgical focus of any synagogue. The paper will discuss the excavated remains, offer possible reconstructions of both phases, and possible implications for changes in liturgical practice from phase I to phase II.

Diana Pavel MA

Universität Erfurt

Max-Weber-Kolleg für kultur- und sozialwissenschaftliche Studien

‘Interpreting Depictions of Altars within Etruscan Iconography’

The topic of Etruscan rituals has been unevenly discussed throughout Etruscan studies and whereas some of these have taken centre stage in investigations, such as the rituals concerning the foundation of cities or the rituals involving divinatory practices, others have been in a certain measure neglected. In this latter case, a wider perspective over the subject of altars as objects of ritual practice is yet to be given the appropriate amount of attention, despite the vast archaeological record that offers valuable information. For the following paper therefore, the main focus will be on the analysis of the iconographic material relating to the depictions of altars, seen as focal elements of ritual practice, and pointing towards an interpretation of rituals within the Etruscan society. Taking as the central source of this inquiry the iconographic record, this would allow for a closer look into establishing in what measure the historical realities of these practices have influenced and can be deduced from these relevant visual representations found on the Etruscan territory and dated mostly to the Archaic and Classical periods.

Prof. Jörg Rüpke

Universität Erfurt

Max-Weber-Kolleg Erfurt

Dynamics of rituals in multi-religious context

‘Focusing Ritual Attention’

Altars are usually seen as places of sacrifice and pivotal sacred spaces in ancient religions. The wide variety of architecturally designed, organic or even temporary altars problematizes such an interpretation. Even more, how does this go together with movable altars? Briefly reviewing ancient evidence and modern interpretations, the paper suggests to drop such an essentialist approach. Against the background of performance and resonance theory it will be suggested to ask about how the use and mise-en-scène of altars helps to focus the attention of participants and affords memorable experiences deemed “religious”.

Session 16 ‘Liturgy 2’

Prof. Cristiana Facchini

Alma Mater Studiorum, University of Bologna

‘Jewish Preaching and Baroque Culture. Christians and Jews Performing in the City’

Preaching was, in the early modern period, a religious practice deeply shared by all religious groups. Travel literature, private correspondence, and autobiographical narratives often describe sermons held in public Christian spaces, and sometimes in Jewish synagogues. Preaching was considered a performance similar to religious theatre, which was kept in high esteem especially by Jesuits. As such, it required formal preparation in the arts of classical rhetoric and bodily training, in order to enhance a perfect performance. Preaching was also monitored in order to keep under surveillance the spread of ‘heresy’.

This paper aims to explore some key features of Jewish preaching in the Baroque period against the backdrop of different confessional Christian cultures. As a dataset I will select sermons preached in Amsterdam, Padua, and Venice in the 17th century, given the strong links between Jewish communities of these cities. My aim is to comparatively assess the fluid ritual dimension of preaching, focusing mainly on the structure of the performance and its social and cultural impact. Therefore, I will attempt to retrieve from the written text the oral dimension of the performance (which is likely easier to understand with sermons written in the vernacular), the use of the body, and the relevance of space and places (ghettos, synagogues, churches, open space), which were, intuitively, very different in every given context. Through a contextual reading of Jewish preaching, I hope to assess how both notions of leisure and control were deployed in order to bond the communities. Moreover, contextual reading enables us with a different appreciation of preaching as a performance, where competition and individuality played a significant role also in conveying fame.

Veronika Klimova MA

Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

‘Rituals in the Light of *The Karaite Catechism in Brief* by Moses Firkovich’

Moses Firkovich (1846-1918) was the grandson of the famous Karaite writer and archeologist Abraham Firkovich. Having known Hebrew and Karaite, he studied many Karaite manuscripts and books. In 1915 Moses published *The Karaite Catechism in Brief* (Rus. *Караимский катихизис вкратце*) in the form of questions followed by answers. Presumably, the author intended to create a resource guide for the Karaite community of Melitopol, where he lived and which was not a leading center of Karaism like Eupatoria, Odessa or Moscow, designed to examine and teach the core beliefs essential to the Karaite faith. Firkovich considers that Karaite identity does need to imply religious orthodoxy, and to be a Karaite, in his account of separation of the Karaites from the Jews, is to be committed to both national and religious identity. The author discusses issues related to the concept of prayer, worship, kenesa, calendar with holidays and fasts. He presents thirteen differences between Karaites and Jews, ten principals of the Karaite faith (removing the obligation to study Hebrew), ten commandments with a brief explanation and several short prayers in the Russian version. Firkovich guides to the prayers and customs of the celebration of Simchat Torah in kenesa, gives the rules for Torah and Haphtorah reading during the feasts, adding more liturgical values to a brief catechism. Drawing on the practical experience, the author provides Karaite insight on death and funeral; prescribes some of the generally accepted mourning rites: rules of behavior for deep mourning, ayak (i.e. a cup of consolation), et-ashn (i.e. a meal with meat), ak-kiymiak (i.e. instead of mourning black clothes to wear bright clothes). While making the brief catechism a fundament for further analysis, Firkovich’s teaching will be analyzed according to

the theoretical laws of *Adderet Eliyahu* by Elijah Bashyatchi and *Levush Malkhut* by Mordecai ben Nisan and compared to the practices described in the journal “Karaites Life” (1911-1912). It will provide by far the most important evidence for reconstructing religious life and identity of the Karaite community in the Russian Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Jonathan Pater MA

Tilburg School of Catholic Theology
Department of Biblical Sciences and Church History

‘Revisiting *Afikoman*: Between Roman Drinking Customs and Jewish Ritual’

The description of the seder in the Mishnah ends with a rather unclear reference which prohibits an *afikoman* after the meal (m. Pes 10:8). The text does not specify what is actually meant by this term, leading to discussion in later rabbinic literature, and, sometimes even heated, debate in modern scholarly literature. Although it is clear that during the Middle Ages the term became associated with the piece of *matzah* which one was explicitly expected to eat at the end of the seder, the meaning of *afikoman* in Antiquity is still debated. While most scholars of rabbinics agree that it is somehow related to Roman dining customs, it has been suggested by some that it was a ritual with messianic significance. The latter view has found some following among patristic scholars, based on a supposed reference in Melito of Sardis’ *Peri Pascha*, 66 and 86. In this paper the history of research will be discussed, tracing the differences of opinion found in the scholarly literature and their background from the earliest interpretations to the present. Furthermore, the background of the term *afikoman* in Antiquity will be reassessed based on a reevaluation of the evidence in early Rabbinic and Christian literature and neglected evidence about dining customs in the Roman world. The purpose of this reevaluation is to get a clearer and more contextualized understanding of the term *afikoman* than found in current scholarly literature.

Session 17 ‘Hinduism 2: The Netherlands’

Dr Freek Bakker

Utrecht University

‘The Ritual’s Home in Dutch Hinduism’

In March 2000 the first purpose-built Hindu temple was opened in Amsterdam. Nowadays the Netherlands count six of these sanctuaries, four of Surinamese Hindustani background, one of Tamil background and one built by autochthonous Dutch Hindus. So, all main strands of Dutch Hinduism are represented in these houses of worship. Their main purpose is to create space for the performance of the regular rituals. Yet these constructions also have other functions. Often they form the religious home of a community and provide space for educational activities.

Starting from the idea that the Jewish synagogue can be regarded as a kind of ‘modernization’ in comparison to the temple of Jerusalem the question arises whether the Dutch Hindu temple has become more synagogal today?

The analysis of the development of the construction of Hindu temples in the Netherlands will be based on the three forms of spatiality designed by Henri Lefebvre, the views on ritual devised by Roy A. Rappaport and ideas developed in the diaspora studies. The impact of traditional Hindu architecture will also be heeded as well as the deviations from this background caused by modernity.

In this way a new view of the development of Hindu rituals in modern society will become visible. The triad of Lefebvre will, moreover, disclose the position of Hinduism in modern Dutch society in relation to other religions in this country. Many Hindus, for example, assert that the construction of their Hindu own house of worship makes their religious heritage more visible over against the mosques built in this country.

For, by establishing purpose-built temples a religion shows its identity in the public space and gives all others the opportunity to get acquainted with its particularities (see also: Younger: 190-193).

Dr Priya Swamy

Leiden University

Leiden Global Interactions Research Profile/South Asian Studies

‘Cuddling the Gods: ‘Cute’ Hanuman as a Ritual Object among Surinamese Hindu Communities in the Netherlands’

The depiction and materialities of Hindu deities shift their shape across historical, political and cultural contexts. This presentation will introduce incarnations of ‘cute’ Hanuman in order to discuss the ways in which ideals of ritual purity are complicated by the accessibility and sensorial experience of cuddly toy versions of Hanuman. It suggests ways in which this accessibility may influence and foster connections to more abstract ritual practices around the worship of Hanuman in a contemporary diaspora context.

Pieter van der Woude
Utrecht University
Master Student of Religious Studies

‘Hindu Temple Processions in the Dutch Public Space’

Recent years have seen an increasing presence of Hindus in the Netherlands and other Western countries. From the 1980s until the early 2000s, Tamil Hindus have fled the disrupting civil war in Sri Lanka, of which a significant number have settled in the Netherlands. With the establishment of several temples, prayer halls, and other institutions, they have positioned themselves in the Dutch religiously pluriform landscape. Although they are relatively 'invisible' groups, Hindus regularly organize public religious festivals, which attract people from inside and outside the communities.

This presentation focuses on Sri Lankan Tamil Hindu processions in the Netherlands. These migrant communities are centered on five temples that each annually organize large processions that move in a circumambulating motion through public space in their neighborhoods. Involving a wide variety of practices, the processions temporarily transform secular public space in Hindu sacred space.

While much research in the Netherlands focuses on Hindus from a Surinamese background, and to a lesser extent on autochthonous Dutch Hindus, so far little attention has been paid to the Sri Lankan Tamils. Since 2016 I conducted explorative research on this phenomenon, paying particular attention to bodily and sensorial dimension. Presenting the findings of this fieldwork in comparison with research on Tamil processions in other Western countries and South Asia, I seek to contribute to a better understanding of how Hindus perform public rituals in the Dutch context.

Two issues will be foregrounded. One concerns the tensions arising between Brahman priests and laity in the performance of the festivals. As temple festivals have non-Brahmanical roots, the views on processions by the Brahman priests are in tension with the popular forms of religion that are practiced by the laity. I will consider how certain practices that are part of the processions are negotiated between the Brahmans and the laity. Second, I will spotlight how Tamils, in displaying their identity in public, represent themselves in relation to other religions, especially with regard to Muslims.

Session 18 ‘Death Mentalities through the Lens of Rituals of Death and Dying 1’

In his book “Western attitudes towards death from the middle ages to the present” (1974), the French historian Philippe Ariès (1914-1984) examined ‘death mentalities’ of the past. Ariès ended his writing with the often cited and discussed ‘forbidden death’ of the 20th century. However, at the beginning of the 21st century the professionalisation of practices around death and dying and processes of secularisation and individualisation in the society at large ask for a re-evaluation of contemporary death mentalities.

This panel aims to interpret death mentalities through the lens of rituals and ritual objects around death and dying and to reveal death mentalities of the past and present that have - at least partly - informed these practices. In this panel, Caroline Brasjen-Mudde (Utrecht University) examines Catholic mourning culture in the Dutch Republic (1588-1795), and Kim van der Weegen (Erasmus MC) explores the spiritual character of palliative care practices.

Focussing on contemporary funeral rituals, Joanna Wojtkowiak (University of Humanistic Studies) analyses the role of changing death representations in funerals from the perspective of aesthetics, and Janieke Bruin (Tilburg University) shows how funeral music in contemporary, personalised funerals balances between the personal and religious sacred. Focussing on (the remains of) dead bodies, Brenda Mathijssen (University of Reading) highlights the ritual character of postmortem care, and Martin Hoondert (Tilburg University) poses the question how material culture related to cremation can be understood from the perspective of the long history of religious and non-religious ritualizing of death and disposal.

Although contemporary practices around death and dying are often characterised as ‘secularised’, the purpose of this panel is to find out how aspects of religion and spirituality have informed or are related to contemporary death mentalities. ‘Interpreting rituals’ of death and dying not only contributes to a deeper understanding of death mentalities, but also to a deeper understanding of rituals, ritualization and ritual objects, and ways to interpret them.

Caroline Brasjen-Mudde MA

Utrecht University

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

‘Emancipation and Negotiation in Early Modern Catholic Mourning in the Dutch Republic’

In the Dutch Republic (1588-1795) traditional mourning culture became problematic because of imposed restrictions on manifestation of ‘papal superstition’ in public space. The funeral tradition with its characteristic purifying and sanctifying rituals on the deceased and the graves had to be re-examined and adjusted by those who stuck to the late medieval (Catholic) faith. Research on mourning objects shows that Catholics in the Dutch Republic developed an alternative route in their rituals of death which helped the tradition to revitalise and survive in an hostile era.

Kim van der Weegen MA
Erasmus Medical Center, Rotterdam
Department of Public Health

‘Ritualization as Meaning-Making Practice in Palliative Care’

The spiritual dimension of care is perceived as a central component of palliative care. Care practices are not merely functional but can gain a spiritual character, religious or non-religious. This paper explores how practices of ritualization serve as meaning making practices in palliative care and how these practices relate to contemporary death mentalities in The Netherlands.

Dr Brenda Mathijssen
University of Groningen

‘Corpse Mentalities: Cultures of Post-mortem Care among Funerary Professionals and the Bereaved’

Whereas dead bodies are often understood as lifeless, still and cold, many funerary professionals and bereaved kith and kin refrain from describing such bodies as corpses. This paper explores the ways dead bodies are conceptualized and performed by Dutch death care professionals and by the dearest and nearest bereaved. By drawing attention to the body as a profoundly social, political and symbolic phenomenon (Butler 2009, Synott 1993, Verdery 1999), the paper highlights 1) the ritual character of postmortem care, 2) the hegemonic norms and mentalities around dead bodies and 3) the social and moral obligations in processes of postmortem ‘care’ as they are practiced and perceived by those involved.

Session 19 'Rabbinic Ritual'

Prof. Meir Bar-Ilan

Bar-Ilan University

'Worshipping Demons: Between Spain and the Land of Israel'

Indulco is a rite of worshipping demons, where man invokes demons for help in several medical issues, consists of prayers to the demons as well as offerings such as honey, sugar, wheat and more. This rite is relatively famous because of those who fought against it and described it at the same time. Raphael Patai, one of the founders of the study of Jewish Folklore, considered this rite to be "Sephardic", that is to say: originating in the Iberian Peninsula, since it was practiced by Jews who migrated from there. He was also of the opinion that the etymology of the word *Indulco* is *Dolce*, which means sweet.

The aim of the paper is to show that this rite originated much earlier than the time when Jews were living in Spain and that the rite not only carried out millennia earlier but was practiced by Jews and non-Jews alike in several forms throughout the ages. The methodological aspect of a living heathen rite is demonstrated by similar practices of invoking "Masters of Oil" as is known from Babylonian magic texts as well as from the Baraita in the Babylonian Talmud (San. 101a), a rite that was practiced in both Ashkenaz and Spain.

Biblical texts will be quoted showing that the ancient Jews believed in demons and worshipped them as semi-gods (or: heathen gods). An interdisciplinary study will show anew a well-known rite that is a "relic" of a heathen rite practiced by monotheists for generations.

Dr Shana Schick

University of Haifa

Center for Inter-disciplinary Research of the Cairo Genizah

'The Emergence of Ritual as a Distinct Category in Rabbinic Thought'

This paper examines how ritual came to be understood as a distinct category of law in religious jurisprudence in late antiquity.

In the bible along with rabbinic literature such as the Mishnah and many legal discussions in the Talmud, there is no clear division between ritual and civil law. The two are often juxtaposed in legal discourse. However, inroads begin to appear in rulings attributed to the famous fourth century sage, Rava. Several rulings attributed to him relating to intentionality and the need for purposeful action, demonstrate that a dichotomy between the two domains was taking shape and that ritual was being understood as a realm distinct from other areas of law. This reaches its full expression in the anonymous redactional strata of the Babylonian Talmud, who formulate principles which explicitly distinguish between the two domains in terms of intentionality, articulating principles such as *mizvot ein zerikhot kavannah*, the performance of rituals does not require intention (b.Rosh Hashana 28a).

In addition to exploring rabbinic texts, I examine parallels in contemporaneous Christian monastic literature and Zoroastrian works and reveal how similar changes may have been taking place across different religious communities in late antiquity.

Thus the modern conception of ritual as an area of practice in which intention is structured less by intention than by shared performances can to some extent be traced to these discussions.

Dr Nathan MacDonald

Saint John's College, University of Cambridge

'Nadab and Abihu's Ritual Innovation (Leviticus 10)'

The offering of strange fire by Nadab and Abihu on the final and climactic day of the priesthood's inauguration has puzzled interpreters since antiquity. What was their error that led to such catastrophic consequences? If the mistake is not to be repeated, it would seem important for early readers to be able to determine the precise nature of the infraction. I shall argue, however, that Nadab and Abihu's error provides no additional insight about how to obey the Mosaic instructions. The offering of incense has already become a trope for illicit ritual improvisation. Nor does it provide evidence of splits within the Aaronide priestly sept. Instead, the two instances of paronomasia at the beginning and end of the story embed the incident in the ritual on the eighth day, and suggest that Lev 9-10 turn around the question of what happens to the sacrificial remains (*hannôtârîm/ hannôteret*). The story of Nadab and Abihu with its implication that ritual innovation must on no account occur diverts the readers' attention from the scribes' own ritual innovation that seeks to resolve contradictory instructions about the sacrificial remains.

Session 20 ‘Death Mentalities through the Lens of Rituals of death and Dying 2’

Janieke Bruin-Mollenhorst MA

Tilburg University
Department of Culture Studies

‘Ave Maria between the Religious and Personal Sacred’

Contemporary funeral rituals are characterised as personal funerals in which the life of the deceased is recalled and celebrated. One of the songs that is frequently played during funerals, is (a version of) the Ave Maria. Based on observations of funeral rituals I will examine how music functions in the ritual frame of funerals and how the Ave Maria balances between the personal and religious sacred.

Dr Joanna Wojtkowiak

University of Humanistic Studies, Utrecht

‘Death Representations and Aesthetics in Western Funerals’

In classical rites of passage theory (Van Gennep, Hertz), funerals are mainly discussed as rites of transition. The deceased is symbolically accompanied into the “world of the dead” through various ritual action. The social statuses of the bereaved and deceased are changing during the funeral. In contemporary, personalised and non-religious funerals, celebrating the life of the deceased and sharing social memories about the deceased have taken an important role, pointing towards more of an integration ritual. Sometimes a representation or reflection on what death means is minimally discussed or even lacking. In this paper, I want to analyse the role of these changing death representations in funerals from the perspective of aesthetics. What can we learn from aesthetics and ritual theory on the role and function of death mentalities in contemporary society?

Dr Martin J.M. Hoondert

Tilburg University
Department of Culture Studies

‘Renewal in the Material Culture of Cremations Since 2000’

Since the year 2000 a lot of new products related to cremation rituals and storing the ashes of the deceased have been brought on the market. These material objects reflect and produce the way people deal with death. The research questions of this paper will be a) how to interpret material culture related to cremation from the perspective of death mentalities, and b) how to understand this material culture from the perspective of the long history of religious and non-religious ritualizing of death and disposal.

Session 21 ‘Good Quality Teaching Materials for Religion Education’

NGG Working Group Religion Education

(NGG Werkgroep Onderwijs Over Religie en Levensbeschouwing)

The purpose of this working group is to promote an approach to the education of religion in Dutch secondary education that matches the disciplinary approach of the non-theological study of religion in Dutch universities. In close cooperation with high school teachers, the working group seeks to (i) create and distribute innovative teaching materials, (ii) develop a study-of-religion based didactics, (iii) organize professionalizing activities for high school teachers, and (iv) promote research on all aspects of religion education, such as the quality of existing teaching material and the political-juridical organization of religion education in the Netherlands. The Dutch working group works together with the Working Group “Religion in Public Education” of the European Association for the Study of Religion.

Contact

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Prof. Wanda Alberts

‘School Education about Religion Beyond the World Religions Paradigm?’

In the academic Study of Religions, the so-called world religions paradigm, i.e. the hegemonic conceptualisation of religion as world religion/s, has been discussed controversially. For example, it has been pointed out that this conceptualisation often leads to an essentialisation of individual religions (and, frequently, also of religion as such) and, furthermore, to modelling “non-Christian religions” according to a Western Protestant Christian norm. In school-related contexts, this is often accompanied with a rhetoric that contrasts “Christianity” with “the other world religions”, reflecting a process of “othering” already in the basic category formation. With the help of the world religions paradigm, simplified “basics” or “basic facts” of individual religions are identified (and compared). Frequently, learning and comparing these facts is established as the body of knowledge and competences that pupils are expected to acquire.

Due to these and other problematic presuppositions and implications of the world religions paradigm, ways of reconstructing BA- and MA programmes in the Study of Religion in a manner that avoids this paradigm are currently being discussed (see Cotter and Robertson 2016). The world religions paradigm, is, however, even more influential in school education about religion/s than at the university level. In my presentation I would like to introduce key arguments against the world religions paradigm and demonstrate why this discussion is relevant for teaching about religion/s at the school level and what we may gain from challenging this paradigm in different school-related contexts. There are certainly no easy and quick solutions in what I hope will be some transformatory process, given the hegemonic status that the world religions paradigm has in almost all educational discourse about religion/s. In the end of my presentation, I will try to show how a discursive approach to religion may help to take the first steps on this path.

Christopher R. Cotter and David G. Robertson (ed.) 2016, *After World Religions. Reconstructing Religious Studies*, London/New York: Routledge.

Dr Sissel Undheim

‘The Study of Religion and the New Core Curriculum in the Norwegian School Subject Religion’

Since 1997, the non-confessional, integrative school subject Religion has been taught to all pupils in Norwegian secondary schools. Contrary to the Netherlands, the aims and content of this school subject are determined by the Ministry of Education, in the same way as the curricula for all other school subjects. However, agreeing on a curriculum for Religion has not been easy, and the curriculum is now being revised for the 5th time since 1997.

This presentation examines the historical developments and challenges the school subject Religion has met over the years, and analyses how the curriculum panel appointed by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training has identified what is called the “core elements” of the subject during the current revision. In particular I pose the question to what extent perspectives from the Study of Religion have influenced how “religion” is defined and represented in these “core elements”, and what have been and still are the main challenges in the process towards a Norwegian school subject based on the Study of Religion. This discussion touches upon all the didactic aspects of a Study-of-Religion-based RE-subject: What should we teach? How should we teach it? and Why is it relevant?

Joël Valk MA

(Corderius College Amersfoort)

‘Image Use in RE Text Books: The Case of the Dutch *Perspectief Series*’

Discussions of RE textbooks tend to focus on the content of the text; relatively little effort has been made to analyse the function of supporting images. This is a problem, for the use of images in RE textbooks present us with a range of didactical challenges that need to be tackled in order to produce good quality teaching materials. Central questions are: What kind of images do actually enhance the pupils’ understanding of the text? How can images be integrated well with the text? And how are images used in RE textbooks currently on the market?

This presentation looks at a specific case, the popular full colour multimedia RE textbook series *Perspectief* which is used in secondary schools in the Netherlands. Based on an analysis of 59 photos of artworks used in the *Perspectief* series, as well as of the texts they support, the presentation evaluates the educational value of the art reproductions in *Perspectief*. Based on this case, some tentative ideas are presented for how image use in RE textbooks can be improved.

Valk, Joël (2018), “Voorbij het plaatje bij het praatje: Over hoe je als docent betekenisvolle afbeeldingen verantwoord kunt gebruiken”, *Narthex: Tijdschrift voor levensbeschouwing en educatie* 18(1), 65-72.