

# Network Promoting the Field of Middle Eastern Christianity

## First Issue of the Newsletter

January 2024

The network Promoting the Field of Middle Eastern Christianity is concerned with Middle Eastern Christianity in the homelands and the diasporas (from approx. 1800 until the present).

It is a scholarly newsletter and therefore would not feature events or publications promoted by a particular Church (unless these are scholarly).

We are a growing community of scholars who work on Middle Eastern Christianity, but we are scattered across various disciplines, departments, countries, scholarly traditions, write in different languages, and do not know much about each other's work. There is a need to connect.

Initiated by Anna Hager, University of Vienna.

To join the network please write to [anna.hager@univie.ac.at](mailto:anna.hager@univie.ac.at)

Next deadline: April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024

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## 2023 Review

- **Publications:**
- **Books**

Edalatnejad, Saeid, *The Legal Status of Non-Muslims in the Shiite Fiqh and Iranian Laws (1906-2020)*, (Boston: Brill, 2022) <https://brill.com/display/title/63323>

This work, a partial history of Iranian laws between 1906 and 2020, demonstrates that the main obstacle to improving the legal status of non-Muslims in Muslim contexts is the *fiqh* opinions, which are mistakenly regarded as an integral part of the Islamic faith. It aims to clarify why and how Islamic Shiite rulings about non-Muslims shifted to the Iranian laws and how it is possible to improve the legal status of the Iranian non-Muslims under the Islamic government.

Erol, Su, *Les Syriacques orthodoxes d'Istanbul. L'Identité d'une minorité chrétienne au XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle* [The Syriac Orthodox of Istanbul. The identity of a Christian minority in the 21<sup>st</sup> century] (Brill, 2023)

<https://brill.com/display/title/68909?rskey=tg5DuM&result=1#showmorecontent>

The Syriac Orthodox community is a religious minority which has been neglected for a long time by the Ottoman and Turkish historiography. This book aspires to provide a method and information for a new understanding of the community in the contemporary context. Based on a fieldwork consisting of interviews, participant observations complemented by historical and contemporary texts, it reveals the emergence of new socio-political dynamics among the Syriacs of Istanbul in their relationship to Turkish contemporary society and diaspora. The survey shows that these eastern Christians have been, and are today, under the influence of a larger phenomenon, that is the globalization of Christianity, marked by Catholicism and recent forms of Protestantism.

Heyberger, Bernard; Girard, Aurélien; Kontouma, Vassa; Sanchez Summerer, Karène; Santus, Cesare (eds), *Middle Eastern and European Christianity, 16th-20th Century : Connected Histories* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023)

Collects Bernard Heyberger's ground-breaking studies on the connected history of Middle Eastern Christianity. Bernard Heyberger carved new paths in the study of Middle Eastern Christianity, helping to shed fresh light on aspects of the connected history of the Near East that had previously been neglected. His ground-breaking work has spanned many disciplines, his approach to 'global microhistory' has focused on questions of space and circulation (people, texts and objects). In addition, he has made important contributions to the social and cultural history of Early Modern Catholicism.

Lellouch, Benjamin, *Ahmed Pacha et les juifs du Caire (1523-1524): Histoire et historiographie* [Ahmed Pacha and the Jews of Cairo (1523-1524): History and Historiography] (Brill, 2023) <https://brill.com/display/title/68953>

It has been long known that Jews, among many others in Cairo, were victims of violence during the revolt of the Ottoman governor Ahmed Pasha (1523-1524), and that they would commemorate their sufferings each year, during a local Purim festival. For the first time, this book draws on a wealth of documentation in Turkish, Italian and Arabic on these acts of violence and their context. It highlights the contribution of Capsali (d. 1550), whose chronicle of the revolt in Hebrew – neglected by scholars – has been translated here; it also prompts readers to reconsider the history of the anonymous liturgical chronicle (*megillah*), and therefore that of the festival as well. As the last avatar of a five-century-old historiographical tradition, it thoroughly recasts the presentation of facts along with an analysis of the social dynamics at work in the revolt, contextualizing them within the history of the transition from the Mamluks to the Ottomans in Egypt and Syria.

Sanchez Summerer, Karène:

Heyberger, Bernard; Girard, Aurélien; Kontouma, Vassa; Sanchez Summerer, Karène; Santus, Cesare (eds), *Middle Eastern and European Christianity, 16th-20th Century: Connected Histories* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023)

-with Bourmaud, P., Gabry S., Levant M., Neveu N., *In Partibus Fidelium. Missions in the Levant and understanding the Christian East, 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> c.*, (Rome: Publications de l'École française de Rome, 2022) <https://books.openedition.org/efr/45768>

In what ways were the Christian missions in the Levant places of production of 'oriental' knowledge? Many late nineteenth and early twentieth-century academics utilised knowledge production from Christian missions, notably by way of scholarly Orientalism. However, the history of this knowledge is also a history of representations: while missionary knowledge helped showcase the cultural and religious traditions of Eastern Christianity, what were the underlying motives and especially the consequences? This book examines the formulation and circulation of Eastern Christian knowledge on either side of the Mediterranean, the study of which is sometimes rooted in non-Anglophone academic traditions. The aim is to shed light on how knowledge relating to Eastern Christianity was assimilated in Europe, as well as the role missions played in this process, especially from the last third of the nineteenth century, when the institutions and instruments for the circulation of knowledge emerged. Another objective is to address the circulations and transformations of this knowledge on either side of the Mediterranean: collected and developed in major European libraries and universities, it was integrated by the governance structures of churches, but quite often also returned to the space it originated from, where it was reappropriated and gave rise to patrimonial processes, notably alongside the sometimes tragic experiences of certain communities during the end of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of new states. Christian missions, at the intersection of East and West, were at the heart of this dynamic .

-with Neveu, N., Turiano, A., *Missions and Preaching: Comparing and de-compartmentalizing the study of the missionary phenomenon (Middle East –North Africa-19th-20th centuries)* (Brill 2022) <https://brill.com/display/title/59712>

Based on a connected, relational and multidisciplinary approach (history, ethnography, political science, and theology), *Mission and Preaching* tackles the notion of mission through the analysis of preaching activities and religious dynamics across Christianity, Islam and Judaism, in the Middle East and North Africa, from the late 19th century until today. The 13 chapters reveal points of contact, exchange, and circulation, considering the MENA region as a central observatory. The volume offers a new chronology of the missionary phenomenon and calls for further cross-cutting approaches to decompartmentalise it, arguing that these

approaches constitute useful entry points to shed new light on religious dynamics and social transformations in the MENA region.

-with Irving S., Nassif C., *'The House of the Priest': a Palestinian life (1885-1954)* (Brill 2022) <https://brill.com/edcollbook-oa/title/62287>

'The House of the Priest' presents and discusses the hitherto unpublished and untranslated memoirs of Niqula Khoury, a senior member of the Orthodox Church and Arab nationalist in late Ottoman and British Mandate Palestine. It discusses the complicated relationships between language, religion, diplomacy and identity in the Middle East in the interwar period. This original annotated translation and accompanying articles provide a thorough explication of Khoury's memoirs and their significance for the social, political and religious histories of twentieth-century Palestine and Arab relations with the Greek Orthodox church. Khoury played a major role in these dynamics as a leading member of the fight for Arab presence in the Greek-dominated clergy, and for an independent Palestine, travelling in 1937 to Eastern Europe and the League of Nations on behalf of the national movement.

Tapia, Aude Aylin de, *Orthodox Christians and Muslims in Cappadocia: Local Interactions in an Ottoman Countryside (1839-1923)* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2023) <https://brill.com/display/title/64972>

This book traces the history of everyday relations of Greek-Orthodox Christians and Muslims of Cappadocia, an Ottoman countryside inhabited by various ethno-religious groups, either sharing the same settlements, or living in neighbouring villages. Based on Ottoman state archives, testimonies collected by the Centre of Asia Minor Studies, and various pre-1923 hand-written and printed sources mostly in Ottoman- and Karamanli-Turkish, and Greek, the study covers the period from 1839 to 1923 and proposes an anthropological perspective on everyday cross-religious interactions. It focuses on questions such as identification and mapping of communities, sharing of space and resources, use of languages, and religiosity in the context of conversions and of shared sacred spaces and beliefs to investigate everyday realities of a multireligious rural society which disappeared with the fall of the Empire.

- **Articles**

Golańska, Dorota, & Woźniak-Bobińska, Marta, "Spaces of fluidity: articulating 'politics of presence' through place-based activism in Iqrit (Israel)," *Cultural Geographies* (2023), open access: <https://doi.org/10.1177/14744740231154258>

This article engages with the material geographies of colonialism in Israel/Palestine by looking at the site-specific cultural activities in Iqrit (Israel), a Christian-Arab village depopulated during the 1948 war in the region.

Lukasik, Candace, "Beyond Church and State: Contentions of Minority Citizenship in Egypt," *Journal of Orthodox Christian Studies* 5:2 (2022), 179-201

Focuses on post-revolutionary pedagogies of Coptic citizenship

Marteijn, Elizabeth S., and Schouten, Lucy (eds.) Special Issue of *Studies in World Christianity* 28:33 (2022): “Heritage and Identity: Exploring the Middle East within World Christianity” <https://doi.org/10.3366/swc.2022.0399>.

With contributions from: Rima Nasrallah, Ronelle Sonnenberg, John S. Munayer, Samuel S. Munayer, Anna Hager, Sotiris Roussos, and Stavros Drakoularakos;

Rima Nasrallah and Ronelle Sonnenberg: Maronite Liturgy as a Developmental Space for Its Emerging Adults in Lebanon, 28(3), pp. 267–286

John S. Munayer and Samuel S. Munayer: Decolonising Palestinian Liberation Theology: New Methods, Sources and Voices 28(3), pp. 287–310

Anna Hager: The Syriac Orphanage and School in Beirut: Building an Elite Transnational Syriac Identity, 28(3), pp. 311–333

Sotiris Roussos and Stavros Drakoularakos: Christians in Syria and Iraq: From Co-optation to Militarisation Strategies, 28(3), pp. 334–360

David Killingray, Black Diaspora Christian Activity in Britain from the Late Eighteenth Century to 1950, 28(3), pp. 361–393

Ladislav Charouz, ‘Returning to the faith of our forefathers’: The Role of Historical Consciousness in Shaping Christian Missionary Work in Nineteenth-Century Taiwan, 28(3), pp. 394–414

McCallum Guiney, Fiona:

With Hunter, Alistair, “Misrecognised as Muslim: the racialisation of Christians of Middle Eastern heritage in the UK,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 49: 15 (2023), 4014–4032

-“Homeland-oriented humanitarian and political diaspora activism amongst Copts, Assyrians and Iraqi Christians in the UK: Successes, Challenges and Generational Influences,” *International Migration Review* 57:3 (2023), 707–730

Philips, Miray:

-[“We Love Martyrdom, but we also Love Life’: Coptic Cultural Trauma between Martyrdom and Rights.”](#) *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*. 11:2 (2023):220-247

-“Christians in Egypt: Transformations in Representational Authority and Narratives of Belonging,” In [\*In the Eye of the Storm: Middle Eastern Christians in the Twenty-First Century\*](#), edited by Mitri Raheb (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2023)

-with Joachim Savelsberg, [“Social Fields, Journalism, and Collective Memory: Reporting on the Armenian Genocide in Legal, Political, and Commemorative Field Events.”](#) *Memory Studies*. Online First.

Nordin, Magdalena:

“Family and the transmission of traditions in the Syriac Orthodox Church in Sweden,” *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society* 36:1 (2023), 19–32. [Family and the Transmission of Traditions in the Syriac Orthodox Church in Sweden | Nordic Journal of Religion and Society \(idunn.no\)](#).

The article is about the relation between religion and family in a diasporic church in Sweden. Focusing on transmission of religious traditions in three Syriac Orthodox parishes, it asks: Where in the church and in what situations does transmission of religious traditions in the parishes take place? Who is part of the transmission of religious traditions in the parishes? How does transmission of religious traditions in the parishes interrelate with family? The article analyses empirical material gathered during ethnographic fieldwork in 2018–2020. The results demonstrate that transmission of religious traditions takes place in the church room, but as well in the church lobby and in meeting rooms, and was more marked in outer relations of family, that is between women in the choir, between children and the community, and in relation to deceased relatives. The church community functioned as an extended family in this diasporic church, and it can be argued that in this case religion is still to be seen as a “communal solidarity project” (cf. [Smith and Adamczyk 2021](#)).

-with Andreas Westergren, “Veiled Integration: The Use of Headscarves among a Christian Minority in Sweden,” *International Journal of Religion* 4:1 (2023) 3-18  
<https://doi.org/10.33182/ijor.v4i1.2340>

In this article, we trace a specific ‘situated bodily practice’, namely the ‘act of covering’ the head with a scarf during liturgy, in a church that has migrated from the Middle East to Sweden. This ‘veiled tradition’ is interpreted as a ‘ritual of migration’ that can cast light on the complexities of re-producing traditions in a new setting, functioning as a ‘cultural prism’ for the question of integration. The broader aim is to nuance the symbolic value given to the veil in political discourse in the West, as a sign of (non-)integration. The empirical basis for this study has mainly been film analyses of liturgies in Syriac Orthodox congregations in Sweden. Building on an analysis of this material, four different usages of the headscarf could be traced: as ordinary dress, that in theory should cover the hair, but seldom did; as festal dress, resembling an accessory; as liturgical dress, used both as a token of piety and spiritual authority, and not to dress in a headscarf, resisting gender discrimination. These usages are compared to, but not fully explained by the idea of ‘new veiling’ among Muslim women, and therefore broaden the understanding of veiled traditions in a migration context.

-with Henrik Johnsen (eds.) *Syrisk-ortodoxa kyrkan i Sverige – tradition och förändring* [*The Syriac Orthodox Church in Sweden Tradition and Change*], Myndigheten för stöd till trossamfund (SST) (2023). [Syrisk ortodoxa kyrkan digital version.pdf](#) ([myndighetensst.se](http://myndighetensst.se))

Sanchez-Summerer, Karène:

-with Okkenhaug, IM, “The Role of Protestant missionaries during the Great Arab Revolt in Jerusalem and South Palestine (1936-1939)- towards humanity?” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies BJMES* special issue coordinated by J. Paulmann and E. Möller, 'Crisis in the Middle East. Humanitarianism, Religion, Diplomacy- 1860-1950', Autumn 2023

-with Irving, S., Zananiri, S. (eds.), special issue, 'Vocabularies of travel and tourism in the 'Holy Lands,' 1870-1950,' *Mahjar & Mashriq. Journal of Middle East and North African migration studies*, June 2023, <https://doi.org/10.24847/v10i2>

<https://lebanesestudies.ojs.chass.ncsu.edu/index.php/mashriq/issue/view/30>

-with Bourmaud, P., Gabry S., Levant M., “Reconstructing Babel!: Christian Missions and Knowledge Production in the Middle East, Nineteenth-Twentieth Century,” *Contemporary Levant* 6: 2 (2023), 1-20

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/20581831.2021.2012332>

Speidl, Bianka, University of Exeter: “Matta al-Meskeen's encounter with Egyptian Muslim Intellectuals,” *Living Stones Yearbook* 2023

- **Book Chapters:**

O’Mahony, Anthony, “Christianity in the Modern Middle East: current situation and future challenges,” in Sotiris Roussos (ed.), *From Pluralism to Extinction? Perspectives and Challenges for Christians in the Middle East* (London: Transnational Press, 2023), 169-204

Sanchez-Summerer, Karène:

-“A 'liquid continent' between contention and connection? For a connected history of mobility in the Eastern Mediterranean', introduction,” in Stelios Irakleous, Michalis N. Michael, Athanasios Koutoupas (eds.), *Eastern Mediterranean: Essays on the cultural exchange between Asia Minor Cyprus and Egypt 19–20th century* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022)

- **Prizes:**

**Elizabeth Marteiijn** received the Honourable Mention in the 2023 Leigh Douglas Memorial Prize for her thesis “Between Ruins and Remnants: Religious Reinvention and Renewal Among Palestinian Christians in West Bank Palestine” (University of Edinburgh. The prize is annually awarded by the BRISMES (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies) for the best PhD theses in Middle Eastern studies.

**Miray Philips** for -"[We Love Martyrdom, but we also Love Life': Coptic Cultural Trauma between Martyrdom and Rights.](#)" *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*. 11:2 (2023):220-247:

- 2022 Outstanding Graduate Research Paper, Sociology Department, U of Minnesota
- 2021 Best Student Paper Award, Religion Section, American Sociological Association
- 2021 Student Paper Award, Human Rights Section, American Sociological Association

## Ongoing Projects

**The Living Stones Holy Land Trust:** text by Robin Gibbons Chair of Living Stones (LSHLT) and Len Harrow editor of the Yearbook: The Living Stones Holy Land Trust (LSHT) is focused on Christianity in the Middle East. A UK charity dedicated to supporting and encouraging academic study, scholarly work, and research on Christianity in the Holy Land and the wider Middle East, LS seeks to achieve its aims via its Theology Group, Yearbook, and Michael Prior Memorial Lecture. Occasionally it offers intellectual support and limited funding on study connected with Christians in the Middle East.

<https://www.livingstonesonline.org.uk/yearbook>

Theology Group six/eight seminars each year on a research theme on some aspect of Christianity in the Middle East including modern history, political and theological thought, interreligious relations, and spirituality. The Yearbook has been published annually since 2012 with 100 plus contributions on all aspects of Christianity in the Middle East. The Yearbook often publishes papers given at the Theology Group.

The Annual Michael Prior Memorial Lecture is given on some aspect of the Christianity in the Holy land and the Middle East. In 2021 Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald, Emeritus President Pontifical Council (now Dicastery) for Interreligious Dialogue and papal nuncio to Egypt and delegate to the Arab League 2006-2012. spoke on ‘Christians in the Arab World and Interreligious Dialogue’ which was published in the Yearbook 2022; in 2022 Dr. Sebastian Brock, Emeritus Reader of Syriac Studies, University of Oxford offered a lecture on “Importance and significance of the Syriac Christian tradition in the Middle East and the wider world’. In 2023 John McHugo, International Lawyer, a Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre and author of A Concise History of the Arabs (2013), Syria: A History of the Last Hundred Years (2015), A Concise History of Sunnis and Shi'is (2019) offered a lecture on ‘The very stones cry out: The Gaza Crisis in context’. The text can be read on-line: <https://www.livingstonesonline.org.uk/events-2>

Marta Woźniak-Bobińska (University of Lodz): “**Political dimension of violence against cities. Urbicide in Palestine – a case study**”, Principal Investigator Dorota Golańska from the University of Lodz, Poland

This is a collective project spanning 2021-2024. The Polish National Science Center financially supports this research initiative under grant 2020/37/B/HS5/00837. Led by Principal Investigator Dorota Golańska from the University of Lodz, Poland, the study encompasses the disciplines of Political Science, International Relations, Ethnography and Cultural Anthropology. The research team, including also Marta Woźniak-Bobińska (University of Lodz) and Ewa Górka (Jagiellonian University in Cracow), aims to analyse the meaning of the destruction of the built environment related to settler colonialism in Palestine. Particular attention is directed towards the experiences of the devastated Muslim and Christian communities, shedding light on narratives often marginalised in prevailing political accounts.

### **Candace Lukasik: Somewhere Else: Political Ecologies and Indigenous Sovereignty in Global Assyria**

I am beginning fieldwork on my second major book project, entitled *Somewhere Else: Political Ecologies and Indigenous Sovereignty in Global Assyria*, which centers transnational Assyrians and will explore the politics of global indigeneity in the aftermath of war and ecological disaster between Washington DC, Detroit, and Mosul/the Nineveh Plain (Iraq)

### **Elizabeth Marteijs: Rituals of Return: The Palestinian Christians from Iqrit and Kufr Bir'im, 1948-present**, an individual research project by Elizabeth Marteijs (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München).

The research project “Rituals of Return: The Palestinian Christians from Iqrit and Kufr Bir'im, 1948-present” [2023-2024] is funded through the Wolfhart Pannenberg Research Fellowship of the Faculty of Protestant Theology of the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. This project aims to investigate the Arab Christian experience of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and its direct aftermath (Arabic: *Nakba*, ‘the Catastrophe’). Through a combination of archival research and ethnographic fieldwork in Galilee, Israel, the project studies how these accounts have established religious mobilisation by church leaders and how they have influenced religious ritual expressions by laypeople. The two entirely Catholic villages of Iqrit and Kufr Bir'im are researched as the two central case studies.

### **Anthony O'Mahony: Scholars, Monks, and Mystics: Christian encounters with Sufism** [Fourth Series] Co-Convenor – with Michael Nazir Ali (St.Edmund's Hall, Oxford) and Fitzroy Morrissey (Pembroke College, Oxford).

I have offered a series of lectures on modern history of Catholic theological and ecclesial thought on relations with Islam and the Muslim World in the wider Middle East as part of the Oxford series on 'Scholars, Monks, and Mystics: Christian encounters with Sufism'. 'Eastern Christian encounter with Sufism and Muslim Mysticism: Catholic theological perspectives from Syriac Christianity - Paul Nwyia SJ (1925-1980) and Antoine Audo SJ (b.1946)'. All Soul's Oxford. 'Eastern Christian Thought and Scholarship on the Syriac Orient, Jerusalem and the Christian encounter with Islam: Youakim Moubarac (1924-1995) in dialogue with Louis Massignon (1883-1962)'. All Soul's Oxford. 'Sufi-Christian Dialogue across the centuries: Serge de Laugier de Beaurecueil, OP. (1917-2005) and the Eleventh century Sufi Khwājah Abdulāh Ansari of Herat - Scholarship and Mysticism in Afghanistan'. St Edmund's Hall, Oxford.

### **Heleen Murre-van den Berg: Rewriting Global Orthodoxy: Oriental Orthodox Communities in a Transnational World (Conference)**

(see upcoming events) The ERC conference “Rewriting Global Orthodoxy: Oriental Orthodox Communities in a Transnational World” contextualizes the results of the ERC project *Rewriting Orthodoxy: Oriental Christians in Europe, 1970-2020*, by comparing and contrasting the situation of the Oriental Christians with each other, with those in other parts of the world, and with those of Eastern Orthodox communities, especially those in migration contexts. This includes project database documenting publications of the Oriental churches over the past fifty years: [FourCornersoftheWorld](#).

Conference focuses on the textual and visual culture as a (differentiated) religioscape that binds oriental Christian communities together, at the local, national and regional – European – level, as much as on the transnational level, connecting the communities in home and host countries. The conference will include keynote speakers Heather Sharkey, Anna Hager, Pooyan Tamimi Arab, Vlad Naumescu in addition to relevant scholars and researchers. Conference contributions will focus on the following aspects:

1. How do Oriental and Eastern Orthodox migrant communities *forge a social imaginary* (expressed in textual and visual cultures) that sustains their diasporan lives (in European countries, or other countries of migration), in a larger transnational context? How is this contemporary imaginary connected to earlier versions, as expressed in religious art and literature?
2. To what extent do we see *similar* developments in diasporan Eastern and Oriental Orthodox communities, as to social imaginaries, as to education, as to interaction with other communities and regarding jurisdictional matters? Is there a shared, Eastern and Oriental, ‘*Global Orthodoxy*’ in the making?
3. How can the study of the varieties of Orthodoxy contribute to the study of religion in the contemporary world? What can the combined study of text, image, sound and practice contribute to our understanding of the varieties of religious life more generally?

### **Miray Philips: Debating Religious Difference**

Miray Philips is an Assistant Professor in Sociology at the University of Toronto. She is a Coptic Egyptian American sociologist and her work focuses on religion and politics between the Middle East and North America. Her book project, *Debating Religious Difference*, explores the geopolitics of defining religious difference in the context of the global war on terror. Based on transnational fieldwork between Egypt, Kuwait, and the United States, I explore how competing actors jostle to define the plight of Christians in the Middle East, bound by global tensions between national security and terrorism. This project was supported by the Social Science Research Council, the Louisville Institute, the University of Notre Dame, the Center for Arab American Philanthropy, and the University of Minnesota.

### **Magdalena Nordin: Integration and Tradition: the Making of the Syriac Orthodox Church in Sweden, Centre for Theology and Religious Studies (lu.se)**

The project intends to critically examine, by ethnographic case studies, integration processes within three specific Syriac Orthodox congregations in Sweden, with a special focus on organization, leadership, religious ritual and religious education, and how religious traditions are upheld and negotiated in these processes: (i) How have the Syriac Orthodox congregations been integrated into the Swedish society? (ii) How have Syriac Orthodox traditions been negotiated, changed, and upheld in relation to the processes of integration?

### **Karène Sanchez-Summerer: Grammars of Preaching: lexis, mapping, staging (Middle East, 19th-21st centuries)**

PredicMO ANR (2024-2028) project (PI Norig Neveu, co PIs: Marie-Laure Boursin, Karène Sanchez Summerer), Agence Nationale pour la Recherche Scientifique

PredicMo considers preaching as a common element of the three Abrahamic religions. Preaching has, however, been understudied in a connected perspective. This project aims to establish a common "grammar" of preaching, understood as a set of principles, rules, strategies and models, together with their variations. While Judaism refutes its universal vocation, Islam and Christianity have placed preaching at the heart of their doctrine. As the driving force of 'making people believe', preaching is understood as a device (dispositif Foucault) embodied by the presence of an individual or a group in a territory in order to constitute or consolidate a community of believers. Adopting a Weberian perspective, the programme focuses on preaching, whose objective is to convince and which develops in a context of religious crisis, and not only on the cure of souls. Preaching as an internal and external constitutive device of faith experiences has been constantly reshaped since the end of the 19th century. PredicMo focuses on its contemporary reinventions and redefinitions.

PredicMo intends to renew the study of preaching through original transversal hypotheses. In order to do so, it has chosen the Middle East as a privileged observatory, a space of elaboration and circulation, constantly connected with international dynamics. The seven territories concerned by our survey (Egypt, Syria, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq) have all experienced this large-scale phenomenon with varying temporalities, actors and dynamics. The project first argues that preaching is a common matrix for the three Abrahamic religions. By analysing preaching in the light of its lexicon (S1), its cartography (S2) and its staging (S3), the programme's first objective is to propose a common 'grammar' of preaching. Its second objective is to elaborate a solid and innovative reflexive methodology allowing a religious, temporal and geographical decompartmentalization (A1). Not limiting itself by focusing on a specific country, PredicMo will analyse influences, emulations, competition in preaching discourses and spatial strategies using several case studies. Finally, preachers have played a decisive role in the (re)configuration of the religious and political environments of the Middle East since the late 19th century, but no archival corpus is devoted to them. Our third objective is therefore to build a catalogue and a corpus of indexed preaching archives (A2).

Supported by IREMAM, Ifpo and EFR, PredicMo will gather an international and interdisciplinary team to cross-analyse new visual, sound and written sources, developing digital tools to make them accessible to a large public. The team consists of specialists of Islam, Judaism and Christianity with a long experience in Middle Eastern fieldwork, as well as various actors of preaching. The people in charge of the three institutions, and the scientific subprojects will guarantee the good governance of the programme (A5). In partnership with the Mucem, a data collection-survey will focus on the material conditions of preaching.

Besides its theoretical contributions, publications and scientific promotion (A4), PredicMo will deliver an online dictionary of the vocabulary of preaching (A1), an indexed catalogue of the sources of preaching and a mapping of the trajectories of preachers (A2). The collaboration with the Mucem will make possible the integration of some of the items of the survey-collection into the museum collection and the creation of an itinerant exhibition (A3). Reflecting the team's approach, two web-documentaries as well as several video and audio clips will be produced and made accessible to a large audience.

### **Alejandra Tapia Basanta: We are still here": Identity and collective memory in the Syriac experience of the Syrian civil war**

This MA dissertation (Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter) investigates the Syriac perspective of the Syrian civil war in northern Syria and its relation to

Syriac identity and collective memory by analysing eight semi-structured interviews with Syrians originally from the Aleppo and Jazira regions. The collective memories of Seyfo are found to be central to the Syriac experience of the civil war. The way in which the civil war is narrated as part of a continuity of violence and ethnic cleansing is analysed. As well as the importance of displacement, the preservation and loss of the community and of its distinct Christian and Syriac identity.

2024

- **Upcoming events**

Raboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands: **Rewriting Global Orthodoxy: Oriental Orthodox Christians in a Transnational World"**

It will take place on **25 – 27 January 2024** at Huize Heyendaal in Nijmegen. The conference is organized as part of the European Research Council Project "Rewriting Global Orthodoxy: Oriental Orthodox Christians in Europe, 1970 - 2020 ". For more information kindly contact: [elise.aghazarian@ru.nl](mailto:elise.aghazarian@ru.nl). The program will soon be available via:

<https://www.ru.nl/en/research/research-projects/rewriting-global-orthodoxy>

for more information on the project "Rewriting Global Orthodoxy" please see "Current Project" section

The Assemani Seminar for Eastern Catholic History, Tomasz Hen-Konarski and Jared Warren from the University of Munich

The Assemani Seminar for Eastern Catholic History is a series of online events that aims to create a common platform for conversation between scholars interested in the history of various Eastern Catholic communities from the Middle Ages until today. The main goal of this initiative is to enable exchange between scholars specialised in different periods and regions, most prominently the ones studying the Eastern European Uniates/Greek Catholics and experts in the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern communities of non-Latin Catholics and other Christians. Each seminar will take place in a roundtable format with two or three informal presentations followed by a general discussion.

For more information: [then@ihpan.edu.pl](mailto:then@ihpan.edu.pl)

(tentative program)

19 February

Keynote lecture: The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Pilgrimages in Poland: Re-storying Borders, Histories and Shrines, Julia Buyskykh (U College Cork)

Discussants: Agnieszka Halemba (IAiE, Warsaw) and Anna Hager (U of Vienna)

11 March

Eastern-rite confessions and contemporary pop culture

Febe Armanios (Middlebury College)

Bohdan Shumylovych (Ukrainian Catholic U)

8 April

Round table on "Livres et confessions chrétiennes orientales" (Brepols)  
Editors: Aurélien Girard (U of Reims), Bernard Heyberger (EHESS-Paris), Vassa Kontouma (EPEH-Paris)  
Discussant: Ioana Feodorov (Romanian Academy)

13 May  
Early modern visual cultures  
Alice Sullivan (Tufts U)  
Charbel Nassif (Romanian Academy)

20 May  
Saints and empire building in the late nineteenth century  
Kirstin Jobst (U of Vienna)  
Norig Neveu (CRNS)

10 June  
Contemporary Orthodox Christians and Eastern-rite Catholics between competition and collaboration  
Pavlo Smytsnyuk (Princeton U)  
Antoine Fleyfel (Institut chrétiens d'Orient)

- **Upcoming Publications**
- **Books**

**Anna Hager: *Christian-Muslim Relations in the Aftermath of the Arab Spring: Beyond the Polemics over 'The Innocence of Muslims'*** (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2024, in print) <https://edinburghuniversitypress.com/book-christian-muslim-relations-in-the-aftermath-of-the-arab-spring.html>

In September 2012, a video titled *The Innocence of Muslims* provoked widespread condemnation and protests in the Middle East. It depicted an attack on Copts by a presumably Muslim group, connecting it with the prophet of Islam, Muhammad, portrayed as a ruthless killer and child-molester. Although the video could have had dramatic consequences for Christians in the region, since Coptic individuals living in the US had produced it, the controversy turned instead into a moment of Christian–Muslim unity.

This book uses this controversy as an entry point into the study of relations between Christians and Muslims in Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan. Instead of dismissing the condemnations and joint reactions as shallow and ritualised displays of solidarity, Anna Hager argues that they offer insights into the mechanisms of Christian–Muslim relations. Christians and Muslims, including Islamist figures, channelled the potential violence – turning it into an occasion to strengthen inter-communal relations and, crucially, their own positions.

**Candace Lukasik: *Martyrs and Migrants: Blood and the Politics of Persecution*** (NYU Press, 2024, in print)

Available for pre-order soon. The book examines how American theopolitical imaginaries of global Christian persecution have remapped Coptic collective memory of martyrdom in migration. This project has received funding from the American Academy of Religion, the

Social Science Research Council, the American Association of University Women, the Orthodox Christian Studies Center at Fordham University, among several others.

- **Articles**

Candace Lukasik with Jason Bruner, “Power Circuits: Asymmetries of Global Christianity,” forthcoming in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*,

Thinks through postcolonial migration, processes of racialization, and Coptic Christian experiences between Egypt and the United States.

Sanchez-Summerer, Karène with Zananiri, S., 'Unsilencing Palestine 1922-1923. Hundred years after Frank Scholten's visit to the Holy Land', *Contemporary Levant*, ahead of print <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/20581831.2023.2281853>

On one of the wider visual photog. collection on Palestine 1921-23 (many about Latins and Orthodox Arab communities)