

# Religions on the Move: Materiality and Migration

International Workshop at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies of Religions  
University of Marburg, 10-11 November 2016

## Schedule

**Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> November 2016, 6:15 p.m.:**

Auditorium (*Alte Aula*) of the Old University

### Annual Research Lecture

Prof. David Morgan, Ph.D. (Durham, NC)

### Technologies of the Sacred:

**Situation and Recalcitrance in the Production & Destruction of Sacrality**

The lecture will be followed by a wine reception in the cloister of the Old University.

**Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016:**

Department of the Study of Religions, Landgraf-Philipp-Str. 4

09:15 – 09:30 a.m.: Opening of the conference and welcome addresses.

09:30 – 10:30 a.m.: Recap with Prof. David Morgan, Ph.D. (Durham, NC)

10:30 – 11:00 a.m.: Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:00 a.m.: Crispin Paine (London)

*Gods and Roller-coasters: How Theme-Parks are Joining Museums as a Locus for Religion and for Modernity.*

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.: Dr. Ekatarina Teryukova (St. Petersburg)

*Migration of Collections: a Case Study of Muslim Relicts from Dagestan Mountain Village Chokch.*

Response: Prof. Marianna Shakhnovich (St. Petersburg)

*Panbabylonism, Travelers and Russian Life of Ancient Oriental Artifacts.*

01:00 – 02:30 p.m.: Lunch

02:30 – 03:30 p.m.: Prof. Dr. Alexander-Kenneth Nagel (Göttingen)

*Silencing Diversity? Governing Religious Diversity through 'Rooms of Quiet'*

03:30 – 04:00 p.m.: Coffee Break

04:00 – 05:00 p.m.: Closing discussion and end of conference

05:00 – 06:00 p.m.: Konstanze Runge: Guided tour of the Museum of Religions

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## Abstracts

### Prof. David Morgan, Ph.D.

*Technologies of the Sacred:*

*Situation and Recalcitrance in the Production & Destruction of Sacrality*

By 'technologies of the sacred' I mean the cultural techniques whereby something is set apart as special and made powerful in the process, or, by contrast, drained of or denied power. The particular instrumentality of such things is highlighted when they cross the boundaries of geography, spatial setting, religious rivalry, and cultural location. In the experience of some Protestant missionaries in Asia and the South Pacific, re-purposing sacred objects often meant the 'hard' iconoclasm of destroying them, in which case they become technologies of the counter-sacred, erasing the old to install a new and rival conception of sacrality. But the re-utilization of the objects could also sometimes mean the 'soft' iconoclasm of appropriating them for a new use, according to which the object were 'dispatched' to London for display in the Missionary Museum as 'trophies of Christianity.' They were eventually de-accessioned and re-tasked once again as ethnographic artifacts, and in some instances as works of art. Nowadays, an additional chapter in their cultural biography is unfolding as some objects are returned to their points of origin as patrimony. At every stage, their specialness was recoded. What survives over all this time? What does the fluidity of the sacred imply? Shifts in spatial setting trigger corresponding taxonomic shifts that redefine sacrality by deploying artifacts in new conceptual and spatial circumstances. But just as space serves to stabilize the experience of the sacred as evanescent, so also its change destabilizes and redefines sacrality.

Morgan, David (2015): Religion and Embodiment in the Study of Material Culture. In: Religion – Oxford Research Encyclopedias. Oxford University Press. 32p.

### Crispin Paine

*Gods and Roller-coasters:*

*How Theme-Parks are Joining Museums as a Locus for Religion and for Modernity*

As a burgeoning middle class seeks out modernity and fun as well as education and divine help, theme-parks are taking over much of the role of museums and much of the role of temples. This short talk will report on a continuing project to examine religion in theme-parks world-wide.

Religion appears in many thousands of theme-parks throughout the world. It appears in three types of park: 'Religion parks', especially in India and the USA, are set up by religious groups to promote their faith. Examples are the Evangelical Christian Holy Land Experience in Orlando, Florida, and the Swaminarayan Hindu Akshardham in New Delhi. Religion also features strongly in cultural parks, both those themed (often nostalgically) on local culture, and those themed on 'exotic' foreign cultures. Such parks are common in China, Japan and South East Asia. Examples include the Buddhist Suoi Tien in Saigon and the Mormon Polynesia park in Honolulu. Religion can also enter amusement parks. The Dolly Parton theme-park, Dollywood, has the Robert F. Thomas Chapel in the middle of the park, named after the doctor who delivered Dolly.

I shall touch on the underlying political agenda of many parks, the relationship of cultural parks to museums, the themes common to parks East and West (heaven and hell, gods and monsters, religious leaders, creation myths), the business context, and the impact on visitors.

Paine, Crispin (2016): Religious theme parks. Unpublished Script. 4p.

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## **Dr. Ekatarina Teryukova**

### *Migration of Collections:*

#### *a Case Study of Muslim Relicts from Dagestan Mountain Village Chokch*

The lecture will examine the history of unique collection from the State Museum of the History of Religion (Saint-Petersburg) which was provided to the Museum in 1930-s by the well-known Caucasus Studies Scholar Evgenii M. Shilling. It includes the ritual objects from destroyed Chokch mosque and collector's dairy which shade light on the collection history, migration and particular importance for Dagestan people religious identity.

Teryukova, Ekatarina (2016): Collecting and Research in the Museum of the History of Religion. Unpublished Script. 7p.

## **Prof. Marianna Shakhnovich**

### *Panbablyonism, Travelers and Russian Life of Ancient Oriental Artifacts*

The paper is on the formation of the museum collections in the theoretical context of panbablyonism theory and its critics. In the center there is the story of the brick from "the tower of Babel", which was found by Russian officer during his travelling to Osman Empire.

Shakhnovich, Marianna (2016): The Study of Religion in Russia – The Foundation of the Museum of the History of Religion. In: Antes et al. (Ed.): Contemporary views on comparative religion – In celebration of Tim Jensen's 65<sup>th</sup> birthday. Equinox Pub. p.425-437.

## **Prof. Dr. Alexander-Kenneth Nagel**

### *Silencing Diversity? Governing Religious Diversity through 'Rooms of Quiet'*

'Rooms of Quiet' have become a widespread tool of public institutions to accommodate religious diversity. While complex organizations, such as hospitals or universities, implement 'rooms of quiet', they allocate spirituality and materialize an organizational sense of what religion is and how religious traditions (ought to) relate to each other. The talk will explore multifaith spatial arrangements in German hospitals as material sources to shed light on institutional notions and myths of religious diversity. It seeks to combine approaches of process tracing and artefact analysis in order to elucidate a) the discursive locus of spirituality within the institution, b) the implicit theology of religions and c) the practical challenges of implementation and their repercussions on the spatial design.

Nagel, Alexander-Kenneth (2015): Religious Pluralization and Interfaith Activism in Germany. In: Studies in Interreligious Dialogue. 25/2. p.199-221.