

**Making new Faith In/Visible  
Religious Movements and Urban Space**

KFG 'Religion and Urbanity'-Workshop

**6-7 June 2024**

The workshop considers the visibility – and invisibility – of religious movements as an important if underexposed aspect in research on the reciprocal formation of religion and urbanity. It explores how new religious groups in towns and cities make themselves in/visible or are made in/visible. By doing so, the workshop also considers the impact this had on the urban space and its multifarious conceptions.

The workshop brings together approaches from sociology, historical and cultural studies: The modes of appropriating and creating space will be discussed; visibility will be considered as premise of social interaction and the perception of difference; and medial strategies employed to display or hide religious mindset are investigated.

The workshop focuses on moments when the in/visibility of religious movements becomes an issue or is perceived as problematic. These instances will be observed from three different, yet overlapping angles of approach: One, urban topography and architecture as carriers of meaning and the question in how far it changes its character with the arrival of new religious ideas. Two, the city as a stage on which hierarchies, rules and the self-image of the civic community are negotiated and how the actions performed by new religious groups temporarily or permanently transform urban space. Finally, moments of 'self-fashioning' and 'city branding' and when and how the arrival of a new faith was fixed and historicised by images, historiography, or other kinds of artifacts. Thus, practices, discourses, images, texts and other artifacts launched by representatives of new beliefs become repositories of the change urbanity undergoes.

The workshop in June 2024 will focus on phenomena within the wide-ranging and cross-epochal framework of the "Religion and Urbanity" research group in Erfurt. The timeframe is large and reaches from the first century up to the present. The examples mainly from Europe and South (East) Asia allow to compare differing strategies that make faith visible or invisible in the urban space and to discuss the individual mechanisms to control them.

One focus lies on situations of major religious change in Europe particularly to be seen in the 16<sup>th</sup> century with the Reformation but also with Islam moving from East to West: the visibility of prosecuted Huguenots in Paris, the ways in which the Reformation changed the urban space in Catholic Vienna, and the topographical changes to Hungarian cathedral cities after the Ottoman conquest. Furthermore, the workshop zooms in on constellations in the Mediterranean area with early Christian concepts of visibility, and Jewish spaces in colonial Tunis. The papers concerning Asia will focus on the afterwar period and discuss Ambedkarite Buddhism, Pentecostal Megachurches in contemporary Singapore, as well as processes of group formation when European traders settled in early modern Vietnam.

In general, we will discuss

- The strategies of visualisation or invisibilisation used. Which ways and means are employed to claim space? Are they specific to a particular culture?
- The perspectives of observation. Is “new faith” an emic or etic attribution? Who decides whether a religious group can become visible? Or conversely, how were decisions for invisibility argued?
- The temporal dimension. Do the methods of making faith visible or invisible change within the course of time? What happens when the novelty of a faith or a group is questioned?

### **Contributions**

Supriya Chaudhuri

**The Buddha in the City: Conversion, Faith and Representation in 19th and 20th century India**

Martin Christ

**Group Formation and foreign traders in early modern Hoi-an (Vietnam)**

Verena Fugger

**Becoming Visible: Christian Appropriation of Urban Space in Late Antique Ephesus**

Tom Hamilton

**Making Huguenots Visible: The Spatial Distribution of Militia Arrests of Protestants in Sixteenth-Century Paris**

Nora Lafi

**Re-interpretation of Jewish Spaces in colonial Tunis**

Katja Rakow

## **Religious Place-making in Commercial Infrastructures: Pentecostal Megachurches in Singapore**

Martin Scheutz

**Transformed urban space. Tentative approaches to the Reformation in 16<sup>th</sup> century Vienna**

Katalin Szende

**Cathedral cities conquered: topographical changes of bishops' seats in the Kingdom of Hungary in the Ottoman period**

Emiliano Urciuoli

**Seeing with the Heart: Visibility Regimes in Early Christ Religion**

### **Suggested Reading**

*Religion and Urbanity online*, edited by Susanne Rau and Jörg Rüpke. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2024. <https://www.degruyter.com/database/urbrel/html>

Religion and Urbanity: Reciprocal Formations Blog. <https://urbrel.hypotheses.org/>

Brighenti, Andrea Mubi, ed. 2022. *The New Politics of Visibility: Spaces, Actors, Practices and Technologies in The Visible*. Bristol: Intellect. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv36xvrkb>

Garbin, David. 2013. 'The Visibility and Invisibility of Migrant Faith in the City: Diaspora Religion and the Politics of Emplacement of Afro-Christian Churches.' In *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 39,5: 677-696. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2013.756658>.

Hofmann, Henriette Schärli, Caroline, Schweinfurth, Sophie, eds. 2018. *Inszenierungen von Sichtbarkeit in mittelalterlichen Bildkulturen. Festschrift für Prof. Dr. Barbara Schellewald zum 65. Geburtstag*, Berlin: Reimer/Mann.

Stercken, Martina. 'Reformed Space. The Visibility of the New Faith in 16th-Century Zurich' In *Religion and Urbanity Online* edited by Susanne Rau and Jörg Rüpke. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1515/urbrel.15247251>.

Uehlinger, Christoph. 2006. 'Visible Religion und die Sichtbarkeit von Religion(en)', *Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift. Das öffentliche Gesicht der Religionen* 23: 165–184.

### **Further Reading**

Brighenti, Andrea Mubi. 2010. *Visibility in social theory and social research*. Basingstoke: Houndsmill.

Bruhn, Matthias, Borgmann, Karsten eds. 2005. *Sichtbarkeit der Geschichte: Beiträge zu einer Historiographie der Bilder* (Historisches Forum 2005). Berlin: Clio-online.

Keil, Wilfried E., Kiyarad, Sarah, Theis, Christoffer, Willer, Laura, eds. 2019. 'Präsenz, Sichtbarkeit und Unsichtbarkeit von Geschriebenem und Artefakten: Zur Einführung des Bandes.' In: *Zeichentragende Artefakte im sakralen Raum* (Materiale Textkulturen 20). Berlin: DeGruyter. 1-16.

Mallinckrodt, Rebekka von. 2006. ‚Unsichtbare Macht – Repräsentative Machtlosigkeit? Ein Vergleich politischer Einflußmöglichkeiten und architektonischer Repräsentation frühneuzeitlicher Bruderschaften in Venedig und Köln’, *Machträume der frühneuzeitlichen Stadt*, ed. by Christian Hochmuth and Susanne Rau. Konstanz: UVK. 333–353.

Rathmann-Lutz, Anja, ed. 2011. *Visibilität des Unsichtbaren: Sehen und Verstehen in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*. Zürich: Chronos.

Wenzel, Horst. 2010. ‘Sichtbarkeit und Unsichtbarkeit. Zum theatralischen Charakter von Spielregeln.’ In *Die Spielregeln der Mächtigen: mittelalterliche Politik zwischen Gewohnheit und Konvention*. ed. by Claudia Garnier, Hermann Kamp. Darmstadt: WB. 205-228.

### **Organizers**

Klara-Maeve O’Reilly, Susanne Rau, Martina Stercken

### **Venue**

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