

Newsletter “Beyond Canon” – January 2019

Dear Fellows and Friends,

We hope that you had a great start to the New Year. For 2019, we wish you health, good luck – and of course **many inspiring ideas** for your research!

We are looking forward to an **exciting year full of conferences, workshops, publications** and at least 10 resident Fellows to join us here in Regensburg. The first one to arrive in January was our new postdoc researcher Dr. Mari Mamyán (Yerevan State University, Armenia) – a great opportunity to introduce her to you:

1. Personal introduction: Dr. Mari Mamyán

Mari Mamyán received her Bachelor’s degree of the Faculty of Theology at the Yerevan State University (Armenia) in 2009 and her Master’s Degree in 2011. She passed the defense of her PhD thesis (titled “**The Armenian Gospel of the Infancy**”) in June 2018.

Since 2013, Dr. Mamyán worked as a researcher at the **Institute of Ancient Manuscripts Mashtots’ Matenadaran** and started her postdoc research on “Armenian Apocrypha: Texts, Transmission, Reception” on January 16, 2019. To read more, visit [her website on academia.edu](#)

2. Research Summaries: Projects planned by our Fellows

To give you a first insight into their projects, our 2019 Fellows have sent us short summaries of their research plans:

Jan Bremmer (Em., University of Groningen)

“How do the late antique Christians look at the pagans? What do they select? Are their objections to paganism similar to those of the first two centuries? It is my intention to investigate these questions in several apocryphal writings of preferably a wider geographical area in order to obtain a balanced idea of the relations between Christians and pagans at the end of antiquity. For my purpose I will focus in principle on the following three works: the Acta Timothei (about Ephesus ca. AD 400), the Martyrium Marci (about Alexandria late fourth century) and the Acta Philippi (about Hierapolis in Asia Minor, ca. 400). I will try to combine a literary analysis of the texts with the archaeological findings, which will give us a more balanced view of Christianity and paganism at the end of Late Antiquity.”

Isabella D’Auria (University of Naples “Federico II”)

Biblical Paraphrastic Poetry in Latin language between the IV-VI centuries

“Combining pagan and Christian literary tradition, the biblical paraphrastic poetry transposes the Holy texts into verses in order to spread the knowledge of Christian doctrine. The research aims to analyse the various forms of the IV-VI centuries biblical poetical re-writing in Latin language, through the development of a dossier of selected paraphrastic texts. After an overview regarding the definition of the genre and the critical studies, every poetical passage will be properly introduced, translated and commented, so to deepen the ways of re-elaborating the Sacred hypotext, the compositional purposes and the audience to whom these works were addressed.”

Igor Dorfmann-Lazarev (University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies)

“Focusing on para-Biblical sources and their interpretation in pictorial art, I shall investigate the ways in which ancient eastern Christianities represented the human origins. The porosity of the boundaries of various ecclesiastical traditions allowed numerous extra-canonical texts to become, in each particular case, integral parts of a living religious culture, thus making the interplay of its diverse elements complex and unpredictable. The tension existing within a single Christian tradition between the normative writings and Apocrypha vivified that tradition, preventing it from petrification in a rigid and self-contained system. One of the secrets of the survival of Oriental Christianities after the Islamic conquests and up to the present is to be recognised in this tension which has shaped a ‘dual’ character of numerous Christian cultures. The presence of extra-canonical motifs in the intellectual and spiritual world of Oriental Christianities enabled them to elaborate original explanations to the rise of Islam and to give various interpretations to its sacred figures; this also made possible a certain degree of reciprocal recognition between the Christians and the Muslims, allowing for a durable coexistence of the two religions over the expanses of the Near East and Asia.”

Janet Downie (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

“During my time in Regensburg, I will continue work on a monograph on geography and imagination in the Greek-speaking provinces of the Roman Empire. In this book, titled *The Hellenic Landscapes of Imperial Asia Minor*, I examine literary texts from the first to the third century CE to explore how Greek writers of this period viewed the space of Asia Minor in relation to contemporary centers of power and culture at Rome and Athens. In Regensburg I will work mainly on the final chapter of the book, investigating conceptual mapping and the representation of space and place in the Greek novels and in early Christian canonical and apocryphal Acts.”

Fr Damaskinos Olkinuora (University of Eastern Finland)

A MONASTIC MOTHER OF GOD? MARY AS AN ASCETIC IN LITERATURE AND ART

“This on-going project focuses mainly on the Greek-speaking devotion to the Virgin Mary as a monastic model for both male and female ascetics. This aspect of the imitation *Mariae* has been mentioned in numerous studies, but an overarching examination of this part of the Marian cult still awaits to be done. I shall concentrate on ‘apocryphal’, liturgical and ascetical source texts from the 3rd century onwards, as well as iconographic and even musical sources.”

Luigi Walt (Universität Regensburg)

“While completing a monograph on the apocryphal book of Sixth Ezra, I will dedicate the first year of my fellowship to analyze the interplay of visual culture and religious memory in the floor mosaics of the so-called Theodorian Basilica at Aquileia in Italy (early 4th century). My main interest, however, remains exploring the relationship between orality and writing in the cultural history of early Christianity. This will pave the way for a comparative study on the rise and evolution of specific literary genres in early Christian literature, interpreted against the background of late antique practices of book reading and oral storytelling.”

3. Publications

Tobias Nicklas, *Der zweite Thessalonicherbrief* (Meyers Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament 010,2), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2019.

Tobias Nicklas' Kommentar zum Zweiten Thessalonicherbrief ersetzt die auf das Jahr 1909 zurückgehende Kommentierung durch Ernst von Dobschütz durch eine aktuelle Bearbeitung. Nicklas versteht den Text als pseudepigraphische Schrift einer unbekanntes Figur des frühen Christentums, die mit dem Denken des Paulus vertraut war, dieses aber in entscheidenden Punkten einer neuen Situation anpasste. Der Brief antwortet auf eine Krise: Eine sich prophetisch verstehende Gruppe verkündet, dass »der Tag des Herrn schon da« sei (2Thess 2,2) und beruft sich dabei auf Paulus selbst. Um in dieser Situation das Erbe des Paulus zu retten, wird im Namen des Paulus geantwortet. Dabei entsteht ein Text, der nicht nur aufgrund seiner Aussagen zur Endzeit bedeutsam ist, sondern auch mit seiner Kyrio-Logie, d.h. der Rede vom »Herrn« und seinen Ideen vom Wesen der Gemeinde in einer sich dehnenden Zeit theologisch spannend ist. Gleichzeitig bedürfen Aussagen des Texts zum Ethos des Arbeitens oder zur Rolle des Apostels durchaus der historischen Einordnung und hermeneutischen Distanz. Als besondere Herausforderung erweist sich die Idee, das gegenwärtige Leid der Gemeinde sei »sicheres Indiz« der im endzeitlichen Gericht zu erwartenden Gerechtigkeit Gottes. Vor diesem Hintergrund versteht Nicklas den Grundimpuls der Schrift nicht in der Information über die Zukunft, sondern in ihrer »Neubestimmung der Gegenwart«, was auch für die heutige Kirche noch von großem Nutzen sein kann.

Publisher's website: <https://www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com/themen-entdecken/theologie-und-religion/exegese/4937/der-zweite-thessalonicherbrief?number=1094617>

4. Social Media: Find us on Facebook

As some of you have already noticed, we are literally going *Beyond the Canon* of the printed word, using the opportunities of **social media to interact with you**. If you like, visit us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/Beyond-Canon>) for news about our project. Post, share, like: Contributions and vivid discussions are more than welcome!

5. Newsletter issues welcome

If you have issues of interest for the research group, publications or events to be announced in this newsletter etc., please send a **short message to our coordinator** (stephanie.hallinger@ur.de); she will include them in the next newsletter.

Best wishes,

Tobias Nicklas, Harald Buchinger, Andreas Merkt,
Ulrike Linder-Windbichler and Stephanie Hallinger

If you want to unsubscribe from this newsletter, please reply to this e-mail (subject: "unsubscribe").