

Religionsgeschichte der Neuzeit. Profile und Perspektiven

Abstracts

Olaf Blaschke: Abschied von der Säkularisierungslegende. Daten zur Karrierekurve der Religion (1800-1970) im zweiten konfessionellen Zeitalter: eine Parabel, in: zeitenblicke 5 (2006), Nr. 1.

The enlightenment marked the beginning of the "age of secularisation" we still live in: Among many scholars and even among historians dealing with religion this remains the familiar image. They keep labelling the 19th century "secular age", "century of nationalism" or "age of the bourgeoisie". In contrast to the notion that religion and confessional commitment were in constant decline, this article argues that these factors regained importance in the early 19th century and declined only in the 1960s. The 19th century – like the so called confessional age in the 16/17th century – experienced an amazing renaissance of religion. Confessional identities and thus the confessional divide deepened. This resulted in massive confessionalism, permeating politics and society, media and everyday-culture, not only in Germany. Statistics illustrate different manifestations of this phenomenon. In the end, the career of this new confessional age resembles a parabolic curve, starting around 1830 and ending around 1970. Interpreting this time span as a second confessional age or at least as a second age of confessionalism suggests to view this period as a unit, covering different phases of more or less intensive piety.

Burkhard Gladigow: Europäische Religionsgeschichte seit der Renaissance, in: zeitenblicke 5 (2006), Nr. 1.

With the Renaissance Europe underwent a religious change, which first of all created structural enhancements within the scope of the traditional concept of religion. With a thesis of "naturalness of religion" more and more "variations" of religion were tolerated and even accepted as a "decus" which allowed for a new way of dealing with "other" religions. In a specific class of intellectuals the post-Renaissance period saw the problem of "one" religion (Julian Apostata) giving way to an interest in "other" religions. Within this framework pluralisation processes allocating particular competencies to the emerging individual sciences began to form, remaining compatible with Christianity at least for a certain time. Following the Enlightenment the "spectrum of religious potentialities" gained yet another dimension for the European History of Religion: soteriologically defined religions could then be combined with other religious models, allowing for a "second-order pluralism" specific to Europe.

Monika Neugebauer-Wölk: Zur Konstituierung historischer Religionsforschung 1974 bis 2004, in: zeitenblicke 5 (2006), Nr. 1.

The objective of the preamble is to introduce the general theme with a historiographical review. Starting from the take-off in the early 1970s, an outline is given of the development of the claim to constitute religion research, independent of theology and ecclesiastical history.

Originally there was a programme of socio-historical religion research for modern history, a concept that was soon to form an antagonism to the historico-cultural approach of the early modern historians. However, also in research on the 19th and 20th century there has been a dispute on the ratio of the development in modernism under the terms of freedom of religion and secularisation: ersatz religions, "second denomination" or new religious movements? To date modern historians have not been able to develop a coherent and disciplinarily profiled approach to the history of religion. The editor summarises how she views the reasons for this and discusses the perspectives such work will have in the future.

Monika Neugebauer-Wölk: Esoterik und Neuzeit. Überlegungen zur historischen Tiefenstruktur religiösen Denkens im Nationalsozialismus, in: zeitenblicke 5 (2006), Nr. 1.

The article begins with a view of the widely discussed concept of "Political Religions" of the modern era and addresses initially the basis of this in Eric Voegelin's work. Tying in with his Gnostic thesis, base lines for understanding 'Esotericism' are developed which cover the full circle from 15th century European Renaissance to the early 20th century. The elementary structures of esoteric thinking are exposed and analysed in their historical variability and in relation to the dominant religion, Christianity. The chapter on 'Hitler's Religion' applies these structures - based on Ariosophy - to sources testifying to a specific esoteric religiousness in national socialism and compares the insights gained with the current research status.

Uwe Puschner: Weltanschauung und Religion – Religion und Weltanschauung. Ideologie und Formen völkischer Religion, in: zeitenblicke 5 (2006), Nr. 1.

Religion is at the core of both the voelkish weltanschauung and the voelkish movement. Religion and, in particular religiousness, was the driving force behind the voelkish movement – what was being thought and done; it laid the foundation for voelkish radicalism. The voelkish weltanschauung has characteristics of a political religion, as demonstrated by specific voelkish semantics. However, unlike national socialism where the weltanschauung was an ersatz religion, the voelkish movement created various so-called arteigen religions, i.e. race-oriented and based on populist Germanic ideology. Leaving the various hybrid forms aside, we can roughly distinguish between two voelkish religious concepts and camps: on the one hand most members of the voelkish movement were followers of an Arianised Deutschchristentum, based mainly on anti-semitism, and they did not become organised until after the First World War; on the other hand a minority opted for a regeneration of pre-Christian, Germanic religious beliefs. From 1900 onwards this developed into a series of neo-pagan religious concepts and communities, some of which have since either been revived or still exist today.

Kocku von Stuckrad: Die Esoterik in der gegenwärtigen Forschung: Überblick und Positionsbestimmung, in: zeitenblicke 5 (2006), Nr. 1.

The term "esotericism" is not only a controversial issue in scientific research, but also in general discussion. This article views the most important scientific positions and discusses in particular access as regards the history of ideas and typology, which are primarily the focus of most approaches to interpretation today. With a redress to the more recent deliberations on the structure of the European history of religion emanating from a double pluralism – on the one hand from religions, and on the other, from other rival forms of knowledge –, an interpretation model is then proposed that tries to recover those pluralities. The thesis is that

only in this way can a concept of "western esotericism" be attained, which can transcend the strict temporal and contextual boundaries and thus be a basis for a wide field of research.

Anne-Charlott Trepp: Zwischen Inspiration und Isolation. Naturerkundung als Frömmigkeitspraxis in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts, in: zeitenblicke 5 (2006), Nr. 1.

From towards the end of the 17th century it was common practice among European intellectuals to derive the existence of God, His omnipotence, wisdom and goodness from all the realms of nature. Known as physico-theology, natural theology of the first half of the 18th century has to date been mainly regarded by the research community as an early Enlightenment harmonisation ideology, or a new balance formula between natural sciences and religion. However, the physico-theologians did not consider themselves primarily to be apologists of a new kind of reconciliation between belief and knowledge. Tying in with the tradition of alternative and intensified forms of religiousness of the post-reformatory pietism movement, the investigation of nature often meant for them a specific form of piety particularly close to true experience.

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