Book of Abstracts

Religious Guides to Urbanity

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Stéphanie Binder

“Idealizing social interactions and confronting reality: contacts between religious communities in third century Carthage.”

The third century was a time of self-definition for Christianity. Tertullian was the first Christian author writing in Latin. He spent his lifetime in Carthage. In order to secure his brethren’s faith, he endeavored to redact several guides on how a Christian should live in a pagan environment. What appears from his treatises, and from his work on idolatry in particular, is that Tertullian was aware of, and likely inspired by, Jewish regulations on the same topic. Admitting that Jews in Carthage were of rabbinical obedience, this fact would suggest that some kinds of contacts existed between Jews and Christians in the city.

The ordinances and regulations phrased by the Jewish and Christian elites aimed at making clear for simple people, the largest part of the communities, how they had to behave. These indications display what the elites dreamt ideal relations between communities should be and, in the same time, it gives a glimpse at what those relations must have been, *de facto*, so that the rules had to be designed precisely on some points and not on others.

The approaches of the Jewish and Christian elites were motivated by several considerations. First, securing their own faith and defending it against threats and seductive others. Second, displaying the rationale of the religion to avoid, or refute, attacks by outsiders; also, to try and convince new members to join the community or, at least, not to deter them from joining. Third, making it possible to be a member of one of the communities and still to live, eat, learn, work and enjoy – for example— in the existing environment.

In this presentation, I would like to survey, through Tertullian’s treatise on idolatry and the *mishnah* on idolatry, the places and occasions in the life of the city that brought together the communities. Then, I would check what the Jewish and Christian elites’ instructions were and try to account for the reasons why they shaped them the way they did. This will give an insight into how they sailed between the will for idealized secured normativity and the need to comply – or cope – with reality and care for adapted, applicable rules, so as not to jeopardize the motivation of their brethren.

Michael Ehrlich

“When did Muslims establish Ramla?”

The city of Ramla was established by Muslims around 715 CE. Although Muslims did establish other cities, such as Fustāt and Qairawān, in most cases, they decided to establish themselves in pre-existing cities, such as Damascus and Malaga. Ramla's case is peculiar, since a preexisting city, Lydda, stood only two kilometers away. Early-Muslim narrative sources explain that Lydda's residents refused to disclose the location of a depot of columns they intended to use for the

renovation of the local cathedral. However, finding the columns could not have been impossible, if the Muslim conquerors even wanted them at all. Nonetheless, this narrative indicates that in this case, the Muslims established Ramla for religious reasons. I would like to suggest that the Muslims decided to establish a new city not only because Lydda was a Christian city, as were all the other cities in the region, but also a popular pilgrimage destination. As such, they preferred to distance themselves from the Christian festival and established a city nearby.

Veronika Eufinger

"The Pope's homily on the ethics of urbanity. Jesuanic socio-spatial practices as a model for crossing social space and exposing oneself to the other"

Modern Christianity in Western cultures oftentimes depicts the localization in urban environments as the focal point of its struggles with secularization.[1] The secular city[2] is constructed as the burning glass of modern society.[3]

The current starting point as a performed and written authoritative communication concerning the church's construction of urbanity and the corresponding ethics of city life is the year-end closing homily of Pope Francis, which was held at the Vatican Basilica on December 31 in 2019.[4]

The Pope retells the story of Jesus' life as a movement between urban spaces: The urban/rural topology is based on the contrast of the small and the big city. In the former God "reveals his love". In the latter Jesus "joins the sinners and the discarded," is finally "rejected by the big city" and "crucified outside its walls".

The Pope's conclusion is that God is always present in the nourishing and the demanding places. The maxim for a good life is the willingness to take a risk and leave the space of safety to encounter the other and empathize with him/her. Christians have to expose themselves to the city dwellers and the problems they cause and suffer. They cross the rural/urban divide, as well as social space: Their task is to create a fitting between their own habitus and the social position of the other, they have to bridge the space between disparate homologies.[5]

The Pope's stance on urban life and the knowledge he produces, are an approximation of the corresponding "objective structures of meaning".[6] This religious knowledge on urban life (representations de l'espace) and its ethical outcomes shape religious spatial practices (pratique spatiale) and the believer's representations of space (espaces de representation)

[1] Cf. Eufinger, Veronika (2018): Marketplace, Fallow Ground, and Special Pastoral Care: What Christian Churches in Germany know about the City-an Interdenominational Comparison. In: RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND THE CITY. Inquiries into postsecular urbanism. BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC, p. 137–156.

[2] Cox, Harvey (1965): The Secular City: Secularization and urbanization in theological perspective. London: Penguin Books.

[3] Cf. Durkheim, Emile; Luhmann, Niklas (1992): Über soziale Arbeitsteilung. Studie über die Organisation höherer Gesellschaften. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, p. 362.

[4] Cf. Francesco (2019): Celebration of Vespers and Te Deum in Thanksgiving for the past year (31 December 2019). Vatican. Available online w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2019/documents/papa-francesco_20191231_omelia-tedeum.html.

[5] Cf. Bourdieu, Pierre (2015): Sozialer Raum, symbolischer Raum. In: Jörg Dünne & Stephan Günzel (Hg.): Raumtheorie. Grundlagentexte aus Philosophie und Kulturwissenschaften. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, p. 354–366, here: p. 356.

[6] Cf. Oevermann, Ulrich (2002): Klinische Soziologie auf der Basis der Methodologie der objektiven Hermeneutik. Manifest der objektiv hermeneutischen Sozialforschung. Institut für Hermeneutische Sozial- und Kulturforschung e.V. Available online www.ihsk.de/publikationen/ Ulrich_Oevermann-Manifest_der_objektiv_hermeneutischen _Sozialforschung.pdf, 29.04.2017.

and manifest in the production of space.[7] Therefore, the urban Catholic spaces are like texts, where the semantics are embodied and approachable by the sequential analysis of objective hermeneutics.
The *House of the Catholic Church* in the city center of Stuttgart is symbolically divided in a secular area with shops and a café and a sacral part, which contains a table and a well, which resemble the last supper and Moses striking the rock. A counter where visitors can ask all sorts of questions connects the two areas. The nuns talk about "exposing themselves", when they work there. *Old St. Patricks* in downtown Chicago demonstrates that the church's narthex is quiet narrow to greet the attendants. A booth is placed on the street after mass, where volunteers distribute leaflets and people can sign up for outreach activities, the Gay+ meeting or a group for people with adopted kids.
The concept of crossing social space and topological borders as the foundation of a Catholic urban ethic is manifest in tangible church spaces. The spatial practices and representations, which take place there, might also reflect cultural and more specific social disparities in handling the secular city.

[7] Cf. Lefebvre, Henri (2015): Die Produktion des Raums. In: Jörg Dünne & Stephan Günzel (Ed.): Raumtheorie. Grundlagentexte aus Philosophie und Kulturwissenschaften. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, p. 330–340, here: p.333.

Cristiana Facchini

"Strangers in the city: religious diversity and sociability in early modern port cities"

Although learned travelers often praised cities that displayed religious diversity, the management of early modern religious pluralism was indeed the result of a quite complicated disciplinary system that aimed to rule on a wide range of matters: houses, windows, doors, cultic places, and in some cases ritual practices. This contribution seeks to analyze norms and instructions which were addressed to different religious groups living in Italian cities during the period of the Counter Reformation. I will focus primarily on two cities, Venice and Livorno, where Jews, Protestants, Armenians, Greeks and Muslims dwelled, and where complicated systems of rules were composed and applied in order to forge and monitor proper religious and urban behavior. The paper will take into consideration different types of normative sources, composed both by city rulers and Church administration in order to detect what type of sociability the rulers tried to define, and how these norms were more or less effective. I am particularly interested in norms that were conceived as markers of diversity, and how they clashed or reinforced internal disciplinary rules engendered by the communities.

Gioia Filocamo

"“Ecco la cità tua come a te viene”: The Virgin Mary’s Role in the Fifteenth-Century Bolognese ‘Laude’ for the Gallows”

The Bolognese “Confraternita di Santa Maria della Morte”, established in 1336, is among the oldest and best-documented Italian Companies of Justice. In fact, it ran the only Bolognese hospital that hosted terminally ill patients, but took also care of prisoners sentenced to death. The main aim of the brethren who assisted those condemned people was turning every criminal into a saint, convincing him that his death had a precise and useful function. Indeed, plenary absolution in the afterlife could be obtained through a truly accepted death and a clean soul, free from any kind of resentment. Working this way, the Confraternity of Death gained a strong position in town, playing an intermediary role between civic government and religious legitimacy, often conflicting in Bologna, the pope’s second important centre after Rome.

The brethren of Santa Maria della Morte assembled a huge *laudario* (a collection of *laude*) known now in some twelve sources mostly dating from the second half of the fifteenth century containing over two hundred *laude* (non-liturgical devotional songs mainly in Italian, some of which exceed 2000 lines), half still unpublished. In more than a quarter of these poems (paraphrases of official Latin prayers, litanies, *laude*, *contrasti*, *sacre rappresentazioni*, etc.) the Virgin Mary is the central figure evoked. This paper explores her intermediary role between heaven and earth as conveyed in this corpus, a role which appears strictly related to the parallel developments of thought realized both in civic commercial society and legal thinking. In fact, this active protection also affected figurative art: the fifteenth-century diffusion of images of the Madonna who breastfeeds and intercedes goes hand in hand with the very high number of *laude* addressed to her. And the image of Mary who protects the brethren under her reassuring cloak (the *Madonna della misericordia*) stands out also in the oldest Statutes of the Bolognese Confraternity of Death (ca. 1393 circa, fol. 1r).

The Mendicant Orders settled in towns increased Christological devotion and especially Marian devotion, which has always been the hub of their venerations, as demonstrated by the spread of the Rosary (of traditional Dominican matrix) and of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception (of Franciscan origin). This also explains the homogenizing role played by the cult of the Virgin, a role that between the fifteenth and fifteenth centuries led the cult of Mary to prevail over the local saints. The rise in status was also due to the growing insistence on the humanity of Christ, and in the fifteenth century it resulted in the spread of the new prayer of the *Ave Maria*. The Madonna also became a guarantee of merciful intercession and mitigation of the punishment for municipal judicial events, to the point that her image even crept into the iconography connected to justice. The figure of Mary reconciled all the social strata and of all the powers in charge of the cities, and her devotion peaked in the last decades of the fifteenth century, when the comfort of several Marian apparitions soothed the anxiety for the foreign invasions in Italy.

Sara Keller

“Stone and Spirituality in the Making of the Indian City. Visiting Śāstric texts in the creation process of Ahmedabad (15th C).”

Western India experienced Islam as a ruling power from the 14th century onwards, and in a more stable way after the creation of the Sultanate of Gujarat in 1407. Thus, one would expect to observe, from early 15th century onwards, deep structural shifts transforming the face of the Western Indian city. Traditional urban planning features, architectural religious landscape and general urban outfit could have taken an acute turn. Yet the sultanate cities show strong continuities in terms of urban landscape. Religious building maintain their traditional ornamental vocabulary, the toponymy shows puzzling references to pre-existing religious places and urban planning seems to respect ancient schemes.
In order to decipher the reasons of this unexpected continuity, my paper looks at the regulations and customs regulating urban planning prior and during Sultanate. How much was urban planning regulated? Which law or customary law was applied in case of disputes related to the usage of urban space? How was the public area managed in the context of multi-ethnic and multi-religious demographics? My presentation is based on the archaeological study of the walled city of Ahmedabad, capital of the Sultanate of Gujarat from 1411 onwards, and is completed by references to relevant written sources such as royal decrees (*farmān*) and architectural treatises like the *Aparājitaprchchā* and the *Vrksārnava*. It aims to show the significance of the spiritual teaching of local architects, the *sthapati*-s, and its adaptability to changes in the tutelary deity/religion of the ruler.

Reuven Kiperwasser

“Guide to the Rabbinic Market Place”

The Rabbis of Land of Israel where urban people, living mostly in the cities of Galilea and, as a citizen of the Greco-Roman polis, they took part in its everyday affairs. For the rabbis, the *bet hamidrash* – the study house – functioned as a private space for the formation of rabbinic identity, distinct from and even antagonistic to other Jews, the lay people. As opposite to the private space of religiously motivated intellectuals, the marketplace was a place where the rabbinic Jew met his uneducated Jewish compatriot, migrants who were meeting long-term residents in the city, or even, it gentile citizens. However, these encounters, at least as they are reflected in the mirror of rabbinic literature, where not just trivial events of urban life, but portraits of and authoritative communication spurred by religious motivation, betray religious concerns or target religious behavior and misbehavior; especially the last. In this presentation, I wish to analyze a few enigmatic narratives depicting the encounter of the typical rabbinic insider with the Other on the marketplace. I want to explain these stories' normative background and shed light on their religious and ideological motivation. Using Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts of symbolic violence and symbolic capital., I want to understand the social tensions in the rabbinic urban scenes. I see the relationships between urbanity and religion as reciprocal: the city, and especially its marketplace brings together urban actors and their symbolic capital, and the encounter generates the binding projects of religious normativity.

Nora Lafi

“*Hisba* Handbooks in Ottoman Tunis: Religious Guides to Urbanity?”

In Ottoman times, on the basis of medieval heritages, the functioning of urban markets, and even of the urban space in general, was regulated by a set of principles that were collected under the form of *Hisba* treatises. The object of this paper is to discuss the relationship between religion and urbanity that this practice illustrates. In contrast with interpretations that tend to reify urbanity as a mechanistic projection of religious principles onto space, the intent here is to reflect on the complexity of this relationship. A first angle of interpretation will consider the nature and context of *Hisba* treatises as well as the entanglement of theory and practice they embodied. Another aspect that will be investigated is about the specific, and constantly renegotiated, relation between the civic and religious spheres as far as urbanity is concerned. The paper will also examine how *Hisba* treatises dealt with confessional diversity in the city and how urbanity as regulated through *Hisba* principles was an expression of a specific approach to its governance. The case study chosen for this discussion is the city of Tunis. Both a prestigious centre of medieval religious literature, and an important provincial capital of the Ottoman West between the 16th century and the 19th century, Tunis was a place in which various treatises were written, commented and discussed. Examining a set of inedited manuscripts, as well as other sources like urban civic chronicles, the aim of the paper is to illustrate how *Hisba* treatises, more than defining an urban order regulated only by religion, were both the instruments and the reflections of the complex negotiation of a form of urbanity in which religious principles were an inspiration, an ethic guidance and a framework for the functioning of a civic sphere that was more complex than just the earthly projection of a static order. And after all, this perspective is also a reflection on the very nature not just of urbanity but of religion as well.

Jörg Rüpke

“A guidebook to urbanity: Propertius, Book 4”

Propertius’ last book of elegies (publ. c. 16 BCE) has been read as a staged conflict between antiquarianism and love elegy. This paper argues that the book as a whole is above all a reflection on the spatial and temporal boundaries of the city and the internal impact of their permanent crossing and breaking down. Then and now, imperial expedition and internal treason, permanent and temporary absence, burying outside and loving inside, admission to and exclusion from sacralised and gendered space and finally the vertical dimension of life’s above and death’s below explore these limits and transfers and constitute the urbanity of the city as well as the urbanity of religion.

Judith Thissen

“Theatre Crusades, Sunday Closings and Shabbat Observance in early 20th century New York City”

What Americans can or cannot do on a Sunday has long been regulated by so-called “Blue Laws.” Nowadays these ordinances are primarily associated with restrictions on the sale of alcohol. However, dating back to the 17th century, they were usually implemented to encourage (or even oblige) church attendance and worship by prohibiting other activities on Sundays. For instance, one of the earliest Blue laws in colonial New York specified

that "there shall be no traveling, servile labouring and working, shooting, fishing, sporting, playing, horseracing, hunting, or frequenting of tippling houses, or the use of any other unlawful exercises or pastimes, by any of the inhabitants or sojourners within this province, or by any of their slaves or servants, on the Lord's day" (1695). Although the provisions of most Sunday rules have been changed over time to adapt to new circumstances, they continued to be rooted in ideas about what was allegedly seen as proper moral behaviour – not just on the "Lord's day" and for Christians, but also during the rest of the week and for all Americans regardless of their religious affiliation. Opposition to these restrictions has come from various groups and for various reasons. For Jews in particular, the mandatory Sunday-closings of stores, shops and factories represented a great challenge to their own religious practice as long as there was no five-day work week because the majority of them needed to work on Saturday (the Jewish Sabbath) to survive economically.

My paper will focus on Sunday law enforcement in New York City in the early 1900s. In this period, municipal authorities and the Christian clergy repeatedly tried to use Blue Laws to restrict the rapid proliferation of commercial entertainments and I will examine what these "theatre crusades" provoked in terms of public responses in a city that was become more and more religiously and ethnically diverse. Around 1900, changing demographics – especially the growing concentration of workers and immigrants in America's largest cities – spurred the emergence of a commercialized mass leisure culture, which in many respects challenged the traditional order in Anglo-Saxon Protestant America. Nowhere was this new public amusement culture more visible than in New York, where the seemingly endless growth of penny arcades, nickel shows, dime museums and commercial dance halls profoundly altered the cityscape and the ways in which the lower classes spent their free time. To give a sense of the most impressive boom: between 1906 and 1908, over 800 five-cent movie theaters opened their doors in the city, with the highest concentrations in immigrant neighborhoods in Manhattan. The large majority of these venues were small storefront shows, which offered a continuous program of short movies and illustrated songs from early in the morning till midnight. For many anti-vice crusaders, religious leaders, Progressive reformers, and other critics of commercialized popular culture, the popularity of these "nickelodeons" - especially with recent immigrants (Italians, Jews) and their children - represented an unparalleled danger to the nation's cultural, social and moral fabric. However, their response to the "motion picture craze" was far from homogenous: it ranged from reform efforts to outright repression. Efforts to reinvigorate the Blue Laws – clearly a repressive strategy – were often fostered by nativist sentiments, aiming both "foreign" audiences and immigrant entrepreneurs. They climaxed in the winter of 1907-8, when New York's Mayor decided to close down all moving picture shows on Sunday and prohibited theatrical performances using make-up, costumes and props, only allowing so-called "Sunday concerts." This disproportionate decision as well as earlier enforcements of the Sunday laws by the New York police led to heated debates in the local press as well as to massive street protests and even court cases. The fiercest opposition came not only from Eastern European Jewish immigrants (intersecting with debates about Shabbat observance and anti-Semitism), but also from German-Americans. Looking back, then, New York City's Blue Law crisis seems a perfect case to explore the interrelated dynamics of religion and urbanity as it involved several religious/ethnic communities and inter-group tensions in the context of quite dramatic changes in the urban landscape.

Emiliano Urciuoli

"Urbane Distances. Christians' Guidelines to Lie, Secrecy, and Discretion "

"Generally speaking, city life is sustained not just through social and spatial remoteness but also by cultivating psychological relationships of participation and withdrawal and by maintaining a tactful balance between ignorance and knowledge of other people (Kemple 2018, 86-87).

The COVID-19 global pandemic is familiarizing all of us with the very concepts, the formal measures, and the informal techniques of social and physical distancing. Yet, historically,

city dwellers did not need plagues to learn how to manage the intensity and intrusiveness of contacts of all types. For instance, in urban societies without internet, cameras, and phone lines, denying or allowing informational access to other urbanites' lives depended on the activation of a variety of distance-enhancing mechanisms – physical, sensorial, semiotic. Building on Georg Simmel's analysis of the sociological significance of secrecy and the secret, whose articulation with city life is clearly expounded above, the paper will address the following questions: a) how did the urban form, its material and media infrastructures, and its specific social relations enable the early Christ believers to employ secrets, perform lies, and rely on discretion as "sociological technique[s]" (Simmel 150, 332) of coping with the management of personal information? b) to what extent can this very management be seen as a characteristic that is inherent to, and plays out, urbanity as a way of life that, among other things, also prevents people from trespassing certain thresholds of sociability and therefore "coming too close" (321)? An assorted set of examples of guidelines to this very specific side of urbanity might include: pseudepigraphy (i.e., writers lie on the authorship of their scripts); written communication (i.e., writers objectivise the content of communication and, at the same time, warn readers against others' indiscretion, manipulation, and forgery [353-354]); passing, covering and other techniques of "de-individualization" (i.e., writers encourage the readers to give false or incomplete information about themselves) (372); dress codes (i.e., writers fear that 'adornment [might] intensif[y] or enlarge the impression of the personality by operating as a sort of radiation emanating from it' [339]). In general, all the examples will reflect, and reflect upon, the way in which social life in cities supposes and enhances attitudes and capacities to navigate the blurry line between mutual knowledge and ignorance, truth-telling and lying, secrecy and publicity, suspicion and trust.

Van Westeide

"Controlling (religious) misbehaviour in an urban context: re-reading the communications and regulations of the Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431 CE) in light of an urban religion approach"

The early ecumenical councils of Christianity are not particularly known for their peaceful proceedings. It is therefore no surprise that attempts to regulate and constrain behaviour had to be made. The Second Ecumenical Council that took place at Ephesus in 431 CE offers a fine case study. I will try to illustrate how urban space is controlled and policed when such a large (and 'international') event is hosted in the city. I will do this by means of a study of the communication between delegates, between delegates and the Emperor, and the imperial *sacra* that will reveal how actors through these texts try to control (religious) behaviour within urban space. When the Emperor convoked the council, he had been very positive: he envisaged a peaceful debate on doctrine among equals, hosted in the bustling economic and central (therefore easily accessible) hub of Ephesus. However, the competition between the different parties soon turned into violent conflict, and it would become a very long summer in which the delegates were confined to the city for months (which brings in another array of physical, infrastructural or logistic problems). The Emperor ruled that non-residents were to leave the city, whereas delegates were not allowed to exit. The city of Ephesus was divided in two camps by the two parties meeting in separate venues. Memnon, the bishop of Ephesus, barred Nestorius, John of Antioch, and their supporters

from entering Ephesisan churches. Physical threats are exercised by Cyril's men in an attempt to force bishops, who were suspected to side with John of Antioch, to join the Cyrillian camp. Each party felt it necessary to hire security guards (be they soldiers, peasants, or monks). When complaints about violent assaults reach the imperial court, Cyril, Memnon, and Nestorius are taken into custody in Ephesus, which causes further outrage. These examples demonstrate that at multifarious levels parties try to restrict each other's movement and try to regulate physical proximity. The hosting of a council requires regulation of behaviour of delegates, segregating delegates from each other and from local residents by restricting or regulating their (potential) interaction, which is enforced by military intervention (presence and use of soldiers) through imperial order. In addition, regulations were required to control particular religious behaviour: who can attend which church, who is prohibited from entering that church, who is allowed to give a sermon in this church, but not in the other, who may celebrate liturgy, who may not, etc. All these issues are present in and around the Council of Ephesus, which make an excellent case study to study the ways in which (religious) (mis)behaviour is controlled in an urban context.