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Plenary Agenda Report for Research Group B-III-2

The Organization of Diversity in the Ecclesiastical Space of Antiquity

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Abstract: *a) Topics and Objectives.* The objective of our project is to describe with greater precision than previously the expansion of antique Christianity against the background of two orienting categories, namely »space« and »knowledge.« To this end, the members and Fellows of our group analyze epigraphic and literary materials, but also findings pertaining to the archaeology, religious geography, and biogeography of selected regions of the Roman Empire and evaluate these in terms of a range of concepts of space.

b) Methods. Data collection and historical-critical analyses of epigraphic and literary materials; incorporation of findings pertaining to the archaeology, religious geography, and biogeography of the respective regions; pluralism regarding conceptions of space. Noteworthy in particular in this context is the fundamental research of PD Dr. Ulrich Huttner, who has developed a databank of early Christian inscriptions from Asia Minor which draws upon a continuously growing collection of data.

c) Current state of the discussion within the research group. No attempt is being made to coordinate our respective findings in terms of a single metatheory vis-à-vis space. Instead, physical, historico-political, social, and post-structural concepts of space are juxtaposed and contrasted with one another and deployed depending upon the respective point of departure.

Projects:

The Expansion of Early Christianity in Asia Minor

- »Pauls Heritage: Lycaonian Christianity of the 3rd and 4th Centuries« (Cilliers Breytenbach)
- »Lycos Valley« (Ulrich Huttner)
- »Southern Phrygia« (Christoph Marksches)
- »Northern and Eastern Phrygia« (Stephen Mitchell)
- »Northern Lycaonia« (Christiane Zimmermann)

The Christianization of Public Space

- »The Impact of Visigothic Legislation on the Church on the Iberian Peninsula after 589« (Jan Bobbe)
- »Christianity and Roman Cults – Religious Transformations in Late Antique Pannonia and Dalmatia« (Henrik Hildebrandt)
- »The Region of Aquileia as a Pivot of East and West in Late Antique Christianity« (Tomas Lehmann)
- »Montanism and Christianity – Competition for the Public in Phrygia« (Christoph Marksches)
- »The Public Appearance of Christianity in Late Antique Antioch« (Frauke Krautheim; dissertation project)

Imagined Space in Early Christianity and Judaism

- »Images of Space in the Third Sibylline Oracle« (Deborah Jacobs; dissertation project)
- »Space in the Apocalypse of John« (Stephanie Schabow)

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1 Findings

The objective of our project is to describe with greater precision than previously the dissemination of antique Christianity against the background of two orienting categories: namely »space« and »knowledge.« To this end, the members and fellows of our group analyze epigraphic and literary materials, but also findings pertaining to the archaeology, religious geography, and biogeography of selected regions of the Roman empire, specifically (from West to East): Gothic Spain, late antique Northern Italy, Pannonia and Dalmatia, Phrygia, Lycaonia, and Pisidia, as well as the metropolis of Antioch, always with a view toward the overarching problematic of the project. To date, we still lack such a larger analysis. When we consult the most recent magisterial overview, namely Adolf von Harnack's *Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (first edition 1902, fourth edition 1924; published in English in 1908 as *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*), it becomes clear that he has assembled reports of Christian communities at specific locations in a highly positivistic manner, and finally illustrated these by means of maps in the original two-volume monograph (HARNACK 1924). This familiar practice of representing the Christianization of previously inhabited locations as hatched or colored areas takes for granted a »container model of space« (EINSTEIN 1954, XII–XVII): in the framework of such a model of space—as–container, Christianization is the »fill level« of a given space conceived as stratified according to religion. Harnack is implicitly committed to this model of space; he poses no questions of biogeographical configuration, nor ones concerning the political or theological construction of space, nor does he integrate with one another the fragments he does contribute to an understanding of the spatial dimension. And Harnack's lucid studies of the theology of the Christian missions of antiquity, their socio-historical praxis and their outcomes, are not connected by to the theme of »space.« More pointedly: he simply does not use the concept of space in the sense which interests us here. Finally, his hatched areas suggest a precision which does not really exist: »Hatched areas [i.e. of certain localities] mean that there were definitely Christians present in the designated districts, but that we lack documentation concerning the towns where they lived« (HARNACK 1924, caption to map 1, from p. 1000). Concerning Harnack's hatched areas, of course, we simply do not know whether just a few Christians were present, or instead hundreds. It is our intention to deploy more precise conceptualizations of the categories of »space« and »knowledge« in order to bring our picture of Christianization into greater focus and to move away from the simplistic conception of the fill level of a container.

Over the past two and half years, to be sure, we have not based our analyses of source material on a unified concept of space; implicitly and consistently constitutive for the work of our group has been a plurality of models of space. Following a system designed by Marcus Sandl (SANDL 2009), we on the one hand employ *historico-political conceptions of space*, since from the beginning, the majoritarian ecclesiastical ordering structure of space relied upon the existing provincial subdivisions of the Imperium Romanum, and hence avoided at least initially superimposing an independent Christian geography on this preexisting political configuration (as shown for example by the essential insignificance of the Bishop of Jerusalem during the third century, or by findings related to inscriptions on church buildings during the fifth and sixth centuries). On the other hand, we also employ *physical conceptions of space*, given that the progress of the Christianization of the Empire was shaped in essential ways by the movements of merchants, officials, and military personnel and was, accordingly, oriented as early as the period of the earliest

Christian missions by main thoroughfares such as the *Via Sebaste* and by divisions of the landscape such as the Cilician Gates, but also – and as early as Paul – by military colonies and settlements of veterans, as Breytenbach has demonstrated (BREYTENBACH 1996). Decisive for us, finally, are *social conceptions of space*, since we are investigating a group consisting of diverse subgroups which continually attempted to construct new social spaces, at the same time seeking to dominate, undermine, or appropriate existing social spaces. When we describe the space of antique Christianity in this way, it becomes clear, finally, that we are interested in Foucault's *poststructuralist concept* of heterotopy, at a minimum as a heuristic if not as an analytic category, given that the spaces of Christianity qualify in a certain sense as classical »other places« in the sense of Foucault's »enacted utopias« of a just society (FOUCAULT 1986, 22–27, esp. 2), albeit by no means solely as provincializations of an properly Roman ›bourgeoisie way of life‹ that could be characterized as a counter-society. The intimate association between space and knowledge which becomes visible here is discussed further below. To date, we have not attempted to order this juxtaposition of physical, historico-political, social, and poststructuralist conceptions of space in terms of a single metatheory, but have instead taken them up individually as perspectives of space and onto space. Emerging from all of these aspects have been questions which have proven helpful in the analysis of the materials undertaken as part of our working routine. The application of a metatheory – for example in the sense of Bourdieu's radical association of physical and social spaces, or even in the sense of Reinhart Koselleck's far more cautious distinction between »meta-historical spatial givens« and »historical spaces« (KOSELLECK 2000, 84–85) – would also require (to speak in a highly abbreviated fashion) certain epistemological preliminary decisions regarding which consensus is unattainable for a group as heterogeneous in disciplinary terms as ours. We could say more simply that for the particular phase of material collection in which our various sub-projects are presently involved, such a metatheory is not necessarily a desideratum.

In the following, we attempt to elucidate the significance of these various aspects of the concept of space with reference to two characteristic examples. To date, we have been preoccupied in the greatest detail with the constitution of space by Christians (cf. the terminology found in SANDL 2009, 165), that is to say, with the emergence of the historical spaces of antique Christendom: according to the available documentation, this proceeded at least initially by endowing spaces of commemoration. Such spaces were established by constructing memories of past generations of Christians and of the founders of the faith (for example, the Apostles or other venerable missionaries). The surviving large textual complexes, which take the form of apocryphal and hagiographical literature, have been evaluated most notably by Henrik Hildebrandt for the provinces Pannonia and Dalmatia; with regard to the provinces of Asia minor, they have been investigated in greater detail only when necessitated by a specific problematic (for example the tombstone of Bishop Abercius from Hierapolis in Phrygia, for whose textual reconstruction and historical contextualization the much later Byzantine vita plays a central role). At the core of our investigations, in particular regarding the projects of Cilliers Breytenbach and Christiane Zimmermann, stood the construction of spaces of commemoration for deceased Christians in the form of tomb inscriptions, ones that are to begin with legible and comprehensible only for a delimited ›in group‹: »Aurelios Theóodoros and Patrikis and Prokla and Euktémon, Christians, for Aurelia Domna, their stepmother, Christian. Aurelios Euktemon and Ammias for their child Onesime, a Christian« (tombstone no. 10 from GIBSON 1978, 24–26). Thus reads the text of an inscription on a white marble tablet from the Museum of Kütahya, presumably from the upper Tembris Valley, which is representative of the Christian

inscriptions of this group of presumed Christians. With regard to decoration, these funerary monuments correspond entirely with contemporary pagan examples, and presumably come at least partly from the same workshop; the formula: »Christians for Christians« is evidently designed to distinguish them from adjacent pagan inscriptions. This practice delimited a specific space within a necropolis where a social network, one transcending the boundaries of family and patronage, would have been preserved spatially even after their deaths. The same is true of the conveniently accessible coastal regions of Pisidia, Isauria, and Lycaonia. Given the current state of research, characterized by the absence of larger contexts for such archaeological finds, the question of whether Christian grave markers in Lycaonia and Phrygia occupied separate Christian cemeteries or instead ones in generally use cannot – in contrast to the above-mentioned Phrygian instance – be sufficiently clarified at this point. For both conceptions of spatial order, we have documentation for the pre-Constantinian period: that purely Christian Koimeteria existed is also deducible from the Christian edicts of Valerian (cf. Eus., h.e. VII 11, 10–11.13; also SCHWARTE 1989, 103–163 and SELINGER 2004, 83–95. On the other hand VOLP, 2002, 102–104 cites a number of documents showing that Christian burial sites were not as a rule separated from those of pagans [reference from U. Huttner]).

Needless to add, we are dealing not solely within the insignia of a space that was connoted as Christian – the Greek text of the tomb marker from Kütahya suggests that we are dealing with a kind of family grave: apparently, Euktémon, one of the sons, established a family grave on the occasion of the death of his daughter Onesime, in which the latter's stepmother was also interred. Whether the family adhered to a special form of antique Christianity native to Phrygia, one belonging to the »New Prophecy« (and referred to by its antagonists as »Montanism«), cannot be resolved in the absence of additional markers of identity. Similar problems have emerged among the members of our working group for other special populations, for example in the context of Jan Bobbe's work on Christendom in Gothic Spain, or Tomas Lehmann's work on Homoeanism in northern Italy.

We return now to the »Christians for Christians« inscriptions from the upper Tembris Valley: while the emphasis on avowals of faith in the »Christians for Christians« formula was interpreted earlier as a sign of special religious zeal, one by means of which Christians marked themselves off from their pagan surroundings, the view has in the meantime established itself that these inscriptions may have been signs of religious tolerance in the upper Tembris Valley during the extended period of peace at the end of the third century prior to the large-scale Diocletian persecution of Christians (reference to Calder in STROBEL 1980, 104–105; for another perspective, see GIBSON 1978, 141–144). In this interpretation, they are signs of a smaller delimited religious sphere of the kind that would have been actualized, apparently, within a number of larger areas only during certain periods and under certain conditions. If we wish to grasp such spatial stratification conceptually, we must have recourse to Pierre Bourdieu, and to his characterization of social space as a »relational field of habitual praxis« (BOURDIEU 1998, 1–13): the Christian space of the upper Tembris Valley was constituted by certain new relations which were superimposed upon pre-existing familial, patronage, and other social relationships. Serving as a symbolic abbreviation of these new relations was the designation »Christian«, which on the one hand encompassed the new »brotherly« relations, and on the other the new hierarchically-ordered relations. Standing in the liturgy for the new brotherly relationship, for example, was the brotherly kiss, while hierarchical relationships were designated by certain authorities and services of the liturgy, as well as by the

office of churchwarden (presbyter). Anyone who has studied early Christianity is familiar with the considerable problems pertaining to source material: since the majority of items of epigraphic testimony have not come down to us at their original locations, and are hence obscured by secondary appropriations, evaluation with respect to concepts of space is beset with serious difficulties.

For this reason, a welcome corrective to the projects of Breytenbach, Mitchell, and Zimmermann, all based primarily on funerary inscriptions, is Frauke Krautheim's analysis of the metropolis of Antioch. Here as well, the Christianization of public space can be characterized as the constitution of a location of commemoration. To illustrate this point, we have chosen the mosaic of the Megalopsychia from the villa locale of Yakto near Daphne in the vicinity of Antioch. The border of this late antique mosaic from the mid-fifth century (more precisely: prior to 470 CE) usefully clarifies the specifically Antiochian form assumed by the restrained architectonic Christianization of public space in late antiquity: the border displays important private and public buildings (such as stadia or thermae) formally found along the route from Daphne to Antioch, as well as scenes of everyday life which play themselves out before these structures. We know that Antioch's cosmopolitan character as well as the city's favorable geographic location in terms of commerce and trade not only accelerated the dissemination of Christianity, but seems also to have promoted its extreme pluralization within the city. One indication of such pluralization, and one whose strongly violent details shall however not be discussed at length here (cf. HAHN 2004, 152) – and which self-evidently generated attempts toward the uniformization of space (as for example also in Visigothic Spain) – is the restrained type of church construction seen in the Syrian metropolis. Identifiable with certainty on the border of the Yakto mosaic is a single church, namely the octagonal structure known as the »large church« (also known as the »golden church« for its gilded cupola), whose construction under Constantine commenced in 327 CE. The structure was probably completed under Constantine in 341 CE and consecrated during the celebrated church consecration synod which took place on January 6th of the same year (ELTESTER 1937, 254–260). As the mosaic shows, the church lay in the vicinity of the palace on Orontes Island; it was destroyed for the most part by a series of earthquakes during the sixth century. The various chapels of the martyrs, which according to a statement by Johannes Chrysostomus surrounded the city like a protective wall (Chrys., pan. Aeg., PG 50, 694; cf. BRÄNDLE 1999, 16), and which represent a central element in the Christianization of public space (in the sense, for example, that each martyr was honored with a procession on feast days, and presented by Chrysostomus and his congregation during services as guiding lights of Christian life) are missing entirely from the Yakto mosaic (with the exception of an annex of a chapel in Daphne), although the border does display the relevant peripheries of the town en route toward Daphne. Of the celebrated Martyrium of Babylas in Daphne, only the workshop which manufactured souvenirs for Pilgrim is displayed, i.e. not the church complex itself. At a minimum, the executor of the mosaic and/or the commissioner of this splendid flooring, then, advocated a concept of space that differed from those of the powerfully eloquent preachers around 80 years earlier. As testimonials to perceptions and representations of space, mosaics are – like texts – media-specific and individual, and needless to say, they provide us with insights into the actual spatial relationships of concrete locations only to a limited degree. Once again, this instance points up the limitations of our analyses of spaces, and justifies our concepts of aspects.

It remains to comment on the forms taken by the awareness of space which was so decisive for the Christianization process. The material that is pertinent to this question is also far more developed than that pertaining to other aspects of space in Christianity. There exist any number of investigations on the theology of the Christian mission and its praxis, not least of all in Harnack's key work, mentioned above – efforts which moreover need not be duplicated. In our remarks on the heterotopia of Christian space (we might also think here of the Christian interpretation of the cemetery as the »other place« for the resurrection of the dead), we realized how strongly space and knowledge are interrelated here. For more tantalizing than such obvious relationships would be an appraisal of the relevant apocryphal and hagiographic literature for its implicit knowledge (for example concerning physical and geographic relationships and other spatial configurations). Christian knowledge founded more or less aggressive claims to (public and private) spaces. The analysis of the highly diverse orders of knowledge which are characteristic of antique Christianity also demonstrate that the provincialization (or formulated more conventionally: the demarcation) of autonomous, heterotopic Christian spaces proceeded consistently in the form of the partial heterotopization (if one can put it this way) of »isotopia,« which is to say, of identical spaces.

2 Publications

Hildebrandt, Henrik. 2008. »Vom Mehrwert eines Apostelschülers – Vorstellungen des frühen Christentums in Salona«. *Das Altertum* 53, 208–222.

Huttner, Ulrich. 2009. »Die Färber von Laodikeia und Hierapolis. Eine Nachricht aus dem Corpus der Alchemisten«. *Marburger Beiträge zur antiken Handels-, Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte* 26, 139–157.

Lehmann, Tomas. 2009. »Die ältesten erhaltenen Bilder in einem Kirchenbau. Zu den frühchristlichen Kirchenbauten und ihren Mosaiken unter dem Dom von Aquileia«. *Das Altertum* 54, 91–122.

Lehmann, Tomas. Forthcoming. »Aquileia. Le prime basiliche e i loro mosaici«. In Giuseppe Cuscito – Tomas Lehmann (eds.), Papers of the Conference *La Basilica di Aquileia: Storia, Archeologia ed Arte*, 07.–09. Mai 2009, Aquileia. Triest.

Marschies, Christoph. Forthcoming. »Il concilio del 381 a Aquileia«. In Giuseppe Cuscito – Tomas Lehmann (eds.), Papers of the Conference *La Basilica di Aquileia: Storia, Archeologia ed Arte*, 07.–09. Mai 2009, Aquileia. Triest.

3 Discussions/Exchanges with Other Topoi Research Groups

Jan Bobbe, lecture »Die Rechtskodifikation der Westgoten: Der Codex Euricianus und die Antiqua « delivered at the doctoral colloquium of Prof. Dr. Stephan Esders (B-I-2 *Fuzzy Borders*), Freie Universität Berlin. 2009

Frauke Krautheim, lecture »Heute ist der Zeitpunkt des Kampfes. Die Agonmetaphorik in der Märtyrerpredigt bei Johannes Chrysostomos« delivered in the framework of a doctoral workshop »Raumtheorien« of Area B *Mechanisms of Control and Social Spaces*, Oct 26, 2010.

Frauke Krautheim, participation in the workshop »Raumtheorien« of the doctoral candidates of Area E *The Processing of Space*, winter semester 2009/2010

Ulrich Huttner, lecture »Die große und die kleine Welt der Hagiographen. Sakrale Landschaften in Kleinasien« delivered in the context of the workshop »Vermessung der Oikumene – Mapping the Oikumene« of the research group B-IV (*Applied Historical Geography*), Oct 30, 2010.

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