



Reactivation and Transformation of Ancient Religions in the Contemporary World

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The Interdisciplinary “Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society” ([JRAT](https://www.religionandtransformation.at/en/)) is an interdisciplinary, international, online open-access journal with a double-blind peer-review process. It was established in 2015, since 2019 it is published with BRILL. Every issue has

a distinct thematic focus which is approached from different disciplines. The journal aims at investigating the contribution of religions to the cultural, political, juridical, and aesthetic dynamics in present-day pluralistic societies. Vice versa, it examines the influence of the contemporary processes of social transformation on religions and religious expressions. JRAT is included in SCOPUS.

Call for Abstracts:

In Cyprus as in Greece, polytheism currently has several thousand followers. The far north of Europe is experiencing a revival of ancient Scandinavian religions: at the end of 2018, a pagan temple was opened in Iceland after a thousand years of absence¹; *Ásatrú*, Scandinavian "neo-paganism", is now recognised as a religion in Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. A similar observation can be made for the "Muslim world": neo-Tengrist movements are on the rise among Turkish, Tatar and Central Asian nationalists². In Kurdistan as well as in Iran, a reconstruction of Zoroastrianism with a nationalist aim is observed as a reaction to the Islamic identity.

The resurgence of ancient religions – which is neither the creation of multiple new dogmatic trends nor a desire to return to the foundations – noticed since the end of the 20th century, can be observed today in all countries³. In particular, the creation or revival of ancient traditions which are becoming religious expressions are now visible: Tengrism, neo-Shamanism, Khemitism, neo-Paganism, neo-Druidism and other reconstructions of traditional religions – their manifestations are numerous.

Ancient religions, mostly undogmatic, may appear attractive because of the space of freedom they seem to offer. Often based on respect for the living (in the broadest sense) in its various expressions, they attract a growing number of followers. At the same time, in the background of these new religious groups, regional, identity or political demands are emerging, to which these 'new' ancient religions can provide legitimacy, anchorage or reinforcement, depending on the case.

This special issue intends to explore the different modes of relationship between various current forms of revivals of ancient religions (hereafter named “neoreligions”), their context and current status, and different political or nationalist currents.

¹ *Iceland's first pagan temple in 1000 years ready in late 2018*, https://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/culture_and_living/2017/12/02/iceland_s_first_pagan_temple_in_1000_years_ready_in/

² Laruelle, Marlène: *Religious revival, nationalism and the 'invention of tradition'*: political Tengrism in Central Asia and Tatarstan, *Central Asian Survey* 7 (2/2017), pp. 203–2016; Harun, Güngör: *Türk Dünyasında dini ve politik bir fenomen olarak tanrıcılık*, *Turkish Studies* 8 (9/2013), pp. 63–70.

³ Pizza, Murphy/Lewis, James R.: *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism* (Handbooks on Contemporary Religion 2), Leiden: Brill 2009.

Therefore, we welcome contributions (in English) focusing on these topics:

- neoreligions and their relationship to the regimes in place
- neoreligions as political power or counter-power
- neoreligions and national identities (which includes transnational or regional affiliation)
- environment and ancient religions
- modern societies and the appeal of “new ancient” religions
- transformations from “ancient” to “neo”
- social and cultural reception of the neoreligions

Proposal: Scholars interested should send a proposal for a **title**, an **abstract** (not more than 300 words) and a **CV** (not more than 150 words) to akgonul@unistra.fr and anne-laure.zwilling@misha.cnrs.fr not later than 31 May 2021. Authors of proposals invited to submit an article will be notified end of June 2021.

Submission: The article (in English) will be due on 31 December 2021. It should be no longer than 40,000 characters (including spaces)/6,000 words, footnotes, bibliography and spaces included. JRAT uses online submission only. Authors should submit their manuscript online via the Editorial Manager online submission system at: editorialmanager.com/jrat/. Please find the author’s instructions here: https://brill.com/fileasset/downloads_products/Author_Instructions/JRAT.pdf

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