Dear Members of PilNet

This is our first Networks Newsletter. The idea of this Newsletter is to inform members about the year’s activities undertaken on behalf of the Network and by individual members. Since 2020 is a very unique year that has resulted in very few live events and opportunities to meet, exchange ideas and participate in pilgrimages we consider this Newsletter as a way to maintain interaction between PilNet members and announce short term Network plans.

The COVID-19 pandemic that changed our lives has had a big impact on our plans for this year. During the EASA Lisbon 2020 conference PilNet was supposed to run a panel titled “Pilgrimage and the Politics of Presence and Absence: Anthropological Horizons on Sacralizing Locality, Visibility and Invisibility in the Contemporary World” convened by Simon Coleman and Evgenia Mesaritou. After consultation with the EASA Scientific Committee and the panel participants, the convenors decided to postpone the panel and organize it live in 2021.

Since every second year, in between the main EASA conferences, the networks organize their events, our plan is to organize the 2nd PilNet Workshop in 2021. After the 1st Workshop organized in 2019 at University of Zadar, Croatia, we decided to plan the 2nd Workshop together with Dionigi Albera and Manöel Penicaud at Aix-en-Provence, France. We have now decided to hold the panel led by Simon Coleman and Evgenia Mesaritou and the 2nd Workshop as a combined PilNet Meeting in September 2021 at Aix-en-Provence. Since the topic of the 2nd PilNet Workshop is inspired by contemporary pandemic events that have had such a dramatic influence on religious practices and pilgrimages, we hope that many of you will contribute with your own research experiences.

We would also like to use this opportunity to announce that the papers given at the 2019 PilNet Workshop will form the basis of a volume titled Approaching Pilgrimage: Method-
ological Issues Involved in Researching Routes, Sites and Practices that will be published by Routledge and co-edited by Mario Katić and John Eade.

Besides this update on Network activities, several members have sent some very interesting reports on their work, plans and publications. Hopefully, more members will contribute to the second PilNet Newsletter.

PilNet convenors: John Eade and Mario Katić

2021 PILNET MEETING
Pilgrimage Studies Network
Aix-en-Provence, France
September 23-25, 2021

The 2021 PILNET Meeting will be held in Aix-en-Provence and will be composed by two interrelated events:


- the 2nd Pilnet Workshop: “Pilgrimages in Times of Pandemics: Crises, Regulations, Innovations” organised by Dionigi Albera and Manoël Pénicaud on September 24-25, 2021

Participants are welcome to those two events that will take place at the Maison Méditerranéenne des Sciences de l’Homme (MMSH) in Aix-en-Provence.

The present call only concerns the Pilnet Workshop since the EASA Panel is already closed.
2nd Pilnet Workshop
Pilgrimages in Times of Pandemics
Crises, Regulations, Innovations

Convenors
Dionigi Albera and Manoël Pénicaud
Idemec, CNRS, Aix-Marseille University

Location:
Maison Méditerranéenne des Sciences de l’Homme (MMSH)
Aix-en-Provence, France

Abstract
Pilgrimages are affected by the coronavirus pandemic at different scales, from local to global levels. The present call aims at developing collective reflection on this worldwide phenomenon based on ethnographic and/or historical data.

We propose some research axes:

Diachronic perspectives. Pilgrimages and pandemics share a long and common history. Several scholarly studies have shown that pilgrims’ circulations and gatherings have often been vectors of virus propagation (from medieval plagues to Spanish flu or 2002–2004 SARS). Therefore, and paradoxically, sacred places – believed to be centres of cure and healing – can also become potential hubs for viral contamination. Nowadays the emergence of Covid-19 (SARS-CoV-2) has refocused attention on the relationship between pilgrimages and epidemics. Are we witnessing a simple resurgence of phenomena known in the past but partly forgotten, or are there specificities in the current crisis?

Politics, regulations, resistances. A notable consequence of pandemics is the deep impact on pilgrimage economies and religious tourism. How are institutions responding to lowered incomes? At the political level, what regulations, restrictions and specific devices do they implement? How do religious institutions manage the articulation between pragmatism and theological principles? The role of states is also crucial (lockdowns, limited gauges, closed borders...). Another dimension relates to believers or pilgrims who claim the right to transgress sanitary rules.

Ritualization, choreography of void. This point concerns the pilgrimage in itself and the transformations caused by the virus. Pilgrimage centres are generally based on a semantic of plenitude (affluence, crowd, effervescence...) but in times of epidemics or pandemics, they become empty spaces, perhaps more propitious to contemplation. With Covid-19, one
can even observe the voluntary “staging” of emptiness and the choreography of void. To what extent do pandemics affect the grammar of pilgrimage by accentuating individualistic involvement and modifying the balance between the travel and the gathering at the shrine? Furthermore, what new rituals are initiated, and how is ritualty altered under lockdown? For example, how do masks and social distancing change the pilgrim habitus?

Participations and subjectivities. In our digital era and in the absence of crowds, what technological innovations are proposed to encourage remote people participation? How do pilgrimage centres operate through mediatisation and virtualisation, for instance, through ceremonies on TV or social networks. Another issue concerns the balance between risk and trust, i.e. between the physical and spiritual benefits, and the risk of becoming contaminated.

Methodological aspects. How to carry out ethnographic research at empty sacred spaces in times of pandemic times, especially when we cannot enter shrines because of lockdown? To what extent does the health context change our approach of fieldwork and imply adjustments in research strategy (tools, devices, digital networks...)?

---

**Special issue of NUMEN: Reframing Pilgrimage in Northern Europe**

Marion Bowman, Dirk Johannsen and Ane Ohrvik have co-edited a special issue of NUMEN, Reframing Pilgrimage in Northern Europe (https://brill.com/view/journals/nu/67/5-6/nu.67.issue-5-6.xml) devoted to studies showing how pilgrimage is currently being reframed in various parts of Northern Europe, where the physical and institutional infrastructure as well as the vernacular traditions of pilgrimage were in many cases interrupted, fragmented, or had disappeared altogether until recently. With contributions on Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Norway, Scotland and Sweden, we feel this will be a valuable contribution to the field of contemporary pilgrimage studies.

This special issue was produced in conjunction with the research project Re-storied Sites and Routes as Inclusive Spaces and Places: Shared

A collaborative project involving researchers in Estonia, Norway, Lithuania, Latvia, and the UK, the project studies how places with a religious or mythical past are gaining renewed significance (https://restoriedsites.ut.ee/).


The book is dedicated to anthropological readings of the urban space of the city of Kraków through the concepts of “heritage(s)” and “the sacred”. The eponymous “maps of the city” relate to anthropological theories of space, pointing that a space is primarily created through its interactions with people. The publication presents a story about Kraków and its various human maps (mental and experiential), entwining the city and forming its various layers. City’s inhabitants, numerous religious bodies, tourists, pilgrims, national and regional institutions and other agents produce and cultivate images of the city as a “historical capital”, “magical city”, “cradle of sacredness”, “city of immense cultural and spiritual heritage” but also a popular tourist destination. The book discusses these various voices as well as the lived experiences of people using the urban space in the past and today.

The book draws on the exhibition that was presented at the Ethnographic Museum in Kraków between November 2017 and February 2018. The exhibition was an outcome of research conducted by the Polish team of the international research consortium HERILIGION (The Heritagization of Religion and the Sacralization of Heritage in Contemporary Europe) http://heriligion.eu/ within the HERA (Humanities in the European Research Area) program Uses of the Past (2016–2019).

More info about the book on the publisher’s website (Publication in OPEN ACCESS):
http://libron.pl/katalog/czytaj/id/332
PDF download (high resolution file): https://www.sendspace.com/file/7zmsj1
Two new books in Routledge Studies in Pilgrimage, Religious Travel and Tourism

**MUSLIM WOMEN’S PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA AND BEYOND**

*Reconfiguring Gender, Religion, and Mobility*

Edited by Marjo Buitelaar, Manja Stephan-Emmrich and Viola Thimm

This book investigates female Muslims’ pilgrimage practices and how these relate to women’s mobility, social relations, identities, and the power structures that shape women’s lives.

**The Dynamics of Pilgrimage: Christianity, Holy Places, and Sensory Experience, by Dee Dyas**

This book offers a systematic, chronological analysis of the role played by the human senses in experiencing pilgrimage and sacred places, past and present. It thus addresses two major gaps in the existing literature, by providing a broad historical narrative against which patterns of continuity and change can be more meaningfully discussed, and focusing on the central, but curiously neglected, area of the core dynamics of pilgrim experience.
Dr Jesko Schmoller, Senior researcher from the Centre for Comparative History and Political Studies, Perm State University has published an article “The Talking Dead” with the journal Nationalities Papers. The article focusses on the issue of “traditional Islam” in Russia and the practices associated with it. (https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/nationalities-papers/article/talking-dead-everyday-muslim-practice-in-russia/C482CFAD3AB851B35269D521585EEAA7)
Conference “Space, the Environment and Identity in the Eurasian region”

14-15 October 2021
NRU Higher School of Economics, School of Sociology
Moscow, Russia

The conference aims to study the interconnections between space, the environment and identity in the Eurasian region from different perspectives: extractive practices, religion and the sacred, and local citizenship movements. The Eurasian space, which the conference aims to explore, comprises Russia and India and the countries and regions between these two major powers (Central Asia, Mongolia and the Indian subcontinent). By focusing on this region, we aim to go beyond studies that examine environmental debates in Western liberal states and economies to analyse how non-Western civilizational and state models influence the way in which the environment is approached.

Conference organisers: Arnab Roy Chowdhury (Assistant Professor of Sociology, NRU Higher School of Economics), Lili Di Puppo (Assistant Professor of Sociology, NRU Higher School of Economics), Christian Fröhlich (Assistant Professor of Sociology, NRU Higher School of Economics).
Yanti M. Hölzchen and Benjamin Kirby co-organised an online workshop on September 24th, 2020 titled “Conceptualising Religious Infrastructures”.

Infrastructure is conventionally defined as the background “scaffolding” that makes social and economic activity—even life itself—possible. Recent anthropological studies have foregrounded the social work that infrastructural networks do by constituting and reconfiguring everyday forms of sociality and lived experience. These insights generate new opportunities to “think infrastructurally” (Chu 2014) about religion: how do religious actors navigate and assemble different infrastructural arrangements, and what kinds of social and spiritual worlds do these sustain? Taking up these questions, this workshop used religious infrastructure as an experimental site for researching social entanglements.

For accessing the presentations’ abstracts and the full workshop brochure, please go to: https://frobenius-institut.de/en/


Research Project: Adriatic Maritime Pilgrimages in Local, National and Transnational Context

Starting from January 2020 the Croatian Science Foundation has approved a research project titled 'Adriatic Maritime Pilgrimages in Local, National and Transnational Context'. The project PI Mario Katić is working at the University of Zadar, Department of Ethnology and Anthropology, which serves as the host institution for the project. The project is interdisciplinary and focuses primarily on undertaking ethnographic research of five Adriatic pilgrimages. The project will be funded over four years and ends in December 2023.

For more information please visit the project’s web page https://pilgrimarunizd.wixsite.com/mysite.

It includes contributions by PilNet members Simon Coleman, John Eade, Jackie Feldman, Nimrod Luz and Evgenia Mesaritou.

An article ‘The Processes, Effects and Therapeutics of Pilgrimage Walking the St. Olav Way,’ co-authored by PilNet members Nanna Natalia Jørgensen and John Eade, and an article ‘Negotiating with the Sacred Other: the Ancient Mechanisms of the Personal Vow Practice’ by Pilnet member Mirela Hrovatin, have been published in the International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage, Vol. 8, Issue 1 (https://arrow.tudublin.ie/ijrtp/vol8/iss1/6/)
Pilgrimage Studies Network 2020

Network convenors and founders:
John Eade, University of Roehampton and University of Toronto, J.Eade(at)roehampton.ac.uk
Mario Katic, University of Zadar, makatic(at)unizd.hr

The members of the Scientific Committee:
Simon Coleman (University of Toronto) simon.coleman(at)utoronto.ca
Anna Fedele (Lisbon University Institute) fedele.anna(at)gmail.com
Anna Niedźwiedź (Jagiellonian University) annamaria.niedzwiedz(at)gmail.com

Members:

G. Abramac A-K. Hermkens A. Niedziewicz
V. Baeva M. Hrovatin C. Notermans
G. Banor Y-P Huang E. Pace
K. Baraniecka-Olszewska P. Innocenti T. Padoan
M. Belaj C. Isnart M. Penicaud
K. Boissevain K. Jankus A. Philippon
M. Boivin N. Jorgensen T. Picková
N. Gregoric Bon I. Kaliszeswka I. Podevak
G. Bowman E. Kawanishi A. Pojatina
M. Bowman J. Kis-Halas P. Post
M. Buitelaar J. Kormina L. di Puppo
J. Butler V. Lebedinsky A. Ron
E. Chemin M. Lecoquierre J. Schmoller
S. Coleman E. Lefter R. Scriven
T. Darieva H-y. Li T. Shchepanskaia
G. Eberhart N. Luz G. Shenar
E. Farinacci P.J. Margry J. Skinner
A. Fedele M. Maric N. Stadler
C. Gaebel Z. Martic I. Stahl
L. Gemzoe A. Masduki V. Thimm
M. Géraldine M. McDonald K. Turčinov
V. Gottwik J. McManus M. Vásquez
O. Hacker E. Mesaritou B. Vecchiet
A. Halemba J. Miles-Watson E. Venbrux
D. Henig E. Mourtazina N. Venkatesan