# Entangling Urban and Religious History: A New Methodology

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# 1 Introduction: A Relationship of Reciprocal Formation

Religion and urbanity are successful and momentous inventions of humankind. Since the late Upper Palaeolithic, groups of people have been observed to seasonally or permanently settle down (Graeber and Wengrow 2021). From the early Neolithic, in many places around the world, they started forming settlements that gradually not only grew in size but also increasingly sought to distinguish themselves from their surrounding communities through spatial and social arrangements. Thanks to architectural features, their size, a specific political (self-)governance, their sociability and way of life as well as religious practices, these social formations were ascribed an urbanity by contemporaries that transformed them into what is generally called cities in the first place. Cities have fundamentally changed in many respects in the course of 6,000 years (Smith 2019); in the early 21st century, more than half of humanity lives in them.

Evidence from as early as the Paleolithic already supports understanding religion as relevant communication with special beings. Like urbanity, it is equally subject to historical change. Our understanding of the historicity of religious practices, ideas and institutions includes a view of their space-producing effects, from lived to imagined spaces, and their interplay and repercussions. In such a perspective, one can ask how people come together in religious practices, what mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion they develop along the way, and how they form and shape places and spaces. The products and conditions of this coexistence also include the material and immaterial constellations, the architectures, practices and discourses that constitute urbanity.

Both religion and urbanity are subjects of research in many different disciplinary fields. The disciplinary divides have been detrimental in conceptual terms as well as for historical understanding. This article brings together a range of scholars from a variety of disciplines – including history, archaeology, religious studies, sociology and anthropology – currently part of the Humanities Centre for Advanced Studies in the Humanities *Religion and Urbanity: Reciprocal Formations*. Of course, the disciplinary background of each author influences their take on the reciprocal formation of religion and urbanity. At the same time, and as this article shows, paying close attention to the reciprocally formative relationship of religion and urbanity is beneficial to all these fields of research.

In our eyes, it is possible to draw broader conclusions about the reciprocal formation of religion and urbanity by taking a historical approach. The dynamics of a reciprocal formation are context-specific; however, only by taking a long-term perspective on a wide range of cities can we fully grasp the significance of urbanity for religion and the importance of religion in shaping urbanity. This approach enables us to see local and temporal specificities and similarities. In order to do so, this article considers examples from different cities from different parts of the world and from different periods (e.g., Ahmedabad, Altona, Barikot, Calicut, Hamburg, London, Munich, Mumbai, Lyon and Rome as well as smaller towns in southwestern Germany).

Setting out from the current state of the literature at the intersection between urban history and religious studies, the introduction turns to our methodological considerations and the conceptual framework of the research group *Religion and Urbanity*. The main body of the article follows a two-fold structure. The first part considers how religion changes urbanity in different religious, historical and geographical contexts. The second part of the article reverses the direction of analysis and asks how religion influenced urbanity.

## 1.1 The state of the art

Previous scholarship dedicated itself to religion in the city.[2] As the title of our research group already signals, we are interested in urbanity, rather than cities, and religion. Rituals, temples, and priesthoods figure prominently in accounts of the administration and ruling of ancient city-states from Mesopotamia to the age of the Mediterranean empires. Post-ancient empires were seen as typically being based on achieved or intended religious monopolies that rendered religion a litmus test of local belonging and an opportunity of local participation, both relying on the exclusion of minorities. It is against this background that recent urban and religious research has focused on religious pluralism as an unprecedented source of creativity or conflict in present-day globalized cities. It is the intention of our research program to mutually question and cross-fertilize such approaches, extending the geographical (and thus cultural and religious) area of investigation. A rich body of research in the sociology of religion is unfolding on this present, increasingly incorporating insights from spatial theory. In many contributions to the literature, the reciprocity of religion embedded in the city and the configuration of urban space is beyond question. However, the primary interest in most cases lies with present-day developments of religious communities and the spatial conditions of their identity;[3] history tends to feature only as memory.

In the past decade, a series of contributions have dedicated themselves not only to a precise analysis of the socialization and appropriation of space in, for example, religious geography (Kong and Woods 2016). The emergence of temporary and peripheral spaces in a ‘post-secular’ city (Becker et al. 2014); (Beaumont and Baker 2011); (Garbin and Strhan 2017); (Hagedorn and Löwe 2021) has equally featured in research looking at the interplay of identities and media of very different scope e.g. (Woods 2019) for South East Asia; (Luz and Stadler 2019); (Burchardt and Griera 2020). These works also ask about emerging concepts of cohabitation and living together – questions that can be brought together in our overarching concept of urbanity. The concept of hyper-diversity (Becci et al. 2013) highlights differences even within groups; the question of “geographies of encounter” (Burchardt and Griera 2021) points to the production of spaces across religious groups. The interrelations of both lived religion and religious heritage with urban development and urban planning was investigated in an exemplary study of Jaipur in India (Narayanan 2015).

Since the early 2000, the concept of *urban religion*, which is repeatedly used in this field (R. Orsi, St. Lanz, K. Day), is the flagship notion of a cross-disciplinary approach to the study of religion in contemporary and preferably global cities. By enlarging the range of the agents and the motivations involved in the co-production of religion and urbanity, this body of research has increased awareness for the thoroughness of this interaction. Yet, in its dominant focus on contemporary (late) capitalist urbanism, the object of urban religion is less religion than globalization – with religion acting as a lens onto globalization. Moreover, in several instances, urban religion ethnographies do not foreground the constitution of specifically *urban* space.

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[2] As exemplified by the recent handbook *Religion and the City* (Day and Edwards 2021b). The general state of research (up to 2017) in the fields of historical urban and urbanization studies (also in relation to religion) as well as in the study of religion (in relation to the city) has been outlined in Rau and Rüpke’s contribution to *Historische Zeitschrift* (Rau and Rüpke 2020).

[3] On the intellectual level, this raises the question of a contemporary "theology of the city", to remain with H. Cox following (Zarnow et al. 2019). See also (Kampmann and Schwöbel 2019).

Neither do they shed light on the production of religious change in which the notion does not function as a processual concept (according to Rüpke 2020), but merely as an abbreviation for religious plurality under the conditions of a globalized modernity, its migratory movements and their media linkage. Therefore, the strong focus on change in religion through the city, as called for by the presidential address of the Association for the Sociology of Religion (Emerson and Knight Johnson 2018), remains limited to hypotheses of growing religious pluralization and simultaneous increase in-group cohesion in rapidly growing cities.

In rather materially oriented quantitative studies on religious architecture (on Asia Minor (Willet 2020)) the question of urban practices and reflections is, in our view, somewhat underdeveloped. Why did temples multiply when actors concentrated on diversifying the spectrum of specialized architecture and functions? It is precisely such religiously produced spatial and social points of contact and their influence on the formation of groups and associated demarcations that challenges us to think about urbanity. However, recent research has placed a new emphasis on the boundaries of the urban and urban religion, such as works on city walls (Brighenti and Kärrholm 2016, Balfour 2019), religious city boundaries (Koortbojian 2020) and studies concentrating on the periphery of the city (Clark and Menjot 2019). For Antiquity and post-ancient cities, the notion of urban religion has also been set in motion and enriched by interweaving local and wider networks of cities (Yalman and Uğurlu 2019, Berthelet and Van Haeperen 2021). Challenging the very dichotomy of city and rural, the far-reaching binaries of the 'urban lens' (Angelo 2016) raises the question of the boundaries and circulation of practices and discourses of urbanity, and the place of their actors beyond dichotomous object-level practices and concepts. Both urbanity and religion take on roles here that need to be analyzed further.

## 1.2 Methodological considerations

For us, combining an interest in the transformation of urban topographies – for example through religious spaces and their flows of use – and in the specifically urban causes or contexts of religious change is crucial when researching the reciprocal formation of religion and urbanity. This includes a precise analysis of the different types of actors we observe, from city visitors and residents to (briefly present) rulers. In this way, we can overcome widespread generalizing representations of religious practices and signs as a means of enhancing cohesion during urban development. The same applies to the equally widespread relegation of urban contexts to purely infrastructural conditions of religious life, as well as the classification of phenomena according to city types (e.g. port or residence city). Similarly, we treat with caution typologies based on the supposition of an overarching role of religious institutions (e.g. cathedral city, temple city, sacred center) or ascribed religious identities ('Islamic city', 'secular city'). They might be useful for capturing interactions between elite urban and religious actors. However, for a larger view of the formation of religion and urbanity, typologies need to be problematized and replaced by a more differentiated – and comparative – approach (Collins 2022).

Comparison builds on acts of translation undertaken from both ends, from the side of the researcher, and from the perspectives inscribed into the 'empirical' field. In the same way that academic heuristics pose questions to empirical 'objects', texts and other 'sources', the phenomena with which historians engage, and the terminologies social actors and spokespersons use, consistently call into question the validity and meanings of descriptive as well as analytical terms and findings (Fuchs 2005, Fuchs 2009, Fuchs 2017). Depending on the chosen perspective,

every *tertium comparationis* results in a different analytical outcome. Comparison thus means an ongoing 'dialogue' [between 'object' and researcher] and comparables being (re-) formulated during the process of (reciprocal) interpretation (Ricoeur 2006).

Neither urbanity nor religion represent transculturally shared *Grundbegriffe* (fundamental concepts). Dimensions of 'urbanity' as well as 'religion' are brought into comparative projects by the researchers. Both terms have a different status, however, with respect to their subject area and are differently anchored in academic discourse. At the same time, both have links with particular, context-specific everyday discourses. The term 'religion' cannot be taken as a *tertium comparationis* without hesitation. Regarding religion –designating an ontologically defined are(n)a of human practices and ideas – the task persists to continuously fend off culture-specific biases creeping in already inherent in the concept. 'Urbanity', on the other hand, points to attitudinal or dispositional dimensions of life-worlds, at least originally linked to certain urban environments. The bias here can be that of accentuating social distinctions (Bourdieu 1984) or of preferring culturally sophisticated attitudes and life-styles over supposedly 'less sophisticated' ones. It is, however, easier than in the case of religion to turn 'urbanity' into a *tertium comparationis*. As such, 'urbanity' allows widening the area and scope of application and doing a search for 'other' urbanities, including those of poorer, but in many cases majoritarian sections of people within cities, or people relating their life perspectives to cities. The idea of the city, in difference to the non-city, which itself can stand for different phenomena, is not a neutral concept either and carries partially diverging connotations in different cultural and historical contexts.

Against this backdrop, we outline a heuristic grid (initially Rau and Rüpke 2022) (initially Rauand Rüpke 2020) that compiles questions relating to a wide range of different urban-religious constellations. These questions address 'empirical' phenomena, or better perhaps, accompany the analytical involvement in (and not just with) phenomenological contexts, voices and practices. This implies staying aware of the ways the object 'speaks back' – the 'resistance' of the phenomena and the meaning structures to one's conceptualizations – asking for re-conceptualizations – as well as to 'unexpected' aspects and dimensions that the analyst did not or could not foresee. Insofar, what we present here reflects the current state of our thinking, and allows for further rounds of comparative, hermeneutic engagement.

Given our interest in the reciprocal formation rather than the mere attestation of religious phenomena in cities or traits of urban thinking or practices in religion, we are not just listing phenomena. Instead, methodologically we focus on the analysis of processes of change – both with regard to religious phenomena in the context of urban change and to phases of religious upheaval in their urban contexts. Ethnographic methods feature insofar as the effects of urban formation processes in cities are traceable up to the present.

The starting point of our research is a critical theory of space, which, in the case of some of its central representatives, was based on a politically interpreted experience. According to this theory, the fact that space and the city were taken for granted was one of the enabling conditions of an exploitative capitalism. Spatial theorists from Henri Lefebvre to Edward Soja therefore always combined the uncovering of this connection with a critical impetus, wanting not only to describe but also to change the social production of space under capitalism, and thus to assert a 'right to the city' or to explore the potential of "third space" (Soja 1996, Lefebvre 2006, Lefebvre et al. 2016). These impulses have been generalized and translated into sophisticated social or human geographic theoretical programs by geographers such as Jacques Lévy and Benno Werlen.

They include agency-centered epistemologies of space and socio-spatial relations as well as practice-theoretical approaches to the production of space (Lévy 1999, Lussault and Lévy 2013). From the beginning, critical spatial theory and social constructivist geography were flanked by anthropological, sociological and philosophical theories of power relations (de Certeau, Appadurai, Löw, Foucault), which had already been tested in their application to the city and/or religion or with which a further level of observation could be drawn into the analysis. However, it is only the large-scale analysis of past (and present) societies as mapped out here that makes it possible to consider historical concepts of space and to question the historical applicability of modern spatial theories (Rau 2017).

On this basis, we have formulated a framework of investigation that focuses on the interaction of phenomena, which we examine with a concept of religion based on action theory, with practices that specifically constitute urban space. Our point of reference is not a ‘city’, based on whichever definition, but the urbanity of historical actors who define a certain type of built space by their practices and discourses as belonging to a certain type of settlement, which can be distinguished as ‘city’ from non-city in historically and regionally specific forms of this polarity.

## 1.3 Concepts

Religion and urbanity are both contested and often misunderstood concepts. Following the results of a previous research group, we conceive of religion as “a permanently changing system of orientation (‘religion in the making’) that has a peculiar but always precarious status within the cultural context to which it relates.” Such religion refers “in its content (…) to some principle transcending the everyday that often appears in the form of personal gods but can also appear in different grades of the ‘supernatural’; communicates this orientation through a wide spectrum of media, in which rituals and specific (‘holy’) objects and stories play a prominent role and in which various forms of systematisation (‘doctrine’) can appear; provides directions for action in the form of both worldviews and norms about how to conduct one’s life …; can assume a solidified institutional character in a variety of forms, which may range from individual charismatic ‘providers’ and their ‘clients’ or ‘students’ to ‘lay associations’ and other membership concepts as well as religious elites who can set limits or open up manoeuvring room for individual appropriations; and finally, in its concrete implementation constitutes a place of intensive interconnection across cultural, spatial, and temporal boundaries” (Fuchs et al. 2019).

We conceive of religion as processual (again, ‘religion in the making’ (Albrecht et al. 2018), not as a fixed tradition or group. Thus, ‘urban religion’ is to be understood as a situated process and not as a cluster of phenomena (Rüpke 2020b). In this way, the concept creates comparability between cities and urban networks, which precisely allows for the elaboration of differences. Aware of the cross-cultural deficiencies – and the colonial overtones of charging the concept of ‘religion’ as a Modern European recasting of Latin *religio* (e.g. (Nongbri 2013) – we theorize religion as relevant communication with special agents endowed with properties different from everyday human agents – the dead (e.g., ancestors) or unborn (e.g., angels), just (e.g., demons) or fully superhuman (e.g., gods) agents – and to whom agency is accorded in a not unquestionably plausible way. Communication with or about such special agents might reinforce or reduce human agency, create or modify social relationships, reinforce or change power relationships (Rüpke 2015). This perspective at once demands and supports a notion of *urban religion* as a situated process and state of affairs. Furthermore, like any other cultural practice, religious communication, too, is a

space-forming and space-contingent practice. Yet, offering a space-sensitive reframing of the ‘lived religion approach’, our conceptualization of religion suggests that there is a distinctive spatial character of religious communication. While place making can be equated with ‘dwelling’ as home-making effect frequently achieved with religious practices, religious communication is inherently also a practice of ‘crossing’. Thus religion can be defined as an action *always* transcending the immediate and unquestionably given situation by temporarily and situationally enlarging the environment considered relevant by one or several actors (Tweed 2006, Rüpke 2020b). In this sense what is specific about urban religion is the way and the extent to which the practitioners´ strategies of inhabiting and transcending spaces are shaped by options and limits faced by themselves or others in organizing their lives in urban environments (Urciuoli 2021a, after Orsi 1999).

While ‘religion’ is applied and criticized in international research on the history of religion, ‘urbanity’ is only selectively understood as a fruitful analytical concept internationally - and at least equally criticized for its ambiguity (Wüst 2004). The Latin concept *urbanitas* was controversial from the beginning, not least because of its ambiguity of space-relatedness (only possible in Rome) and spacelessness (as an aristocratic ethos), which was at the same time a success factor of its dissemination.[4] Detaching urbanity as a concept from such normative connotations and opening it to a trans-epochal and trans-cultural analysis is therefore central for our undertaking – while at the same time resisting an *a priori* limitation to religious phenomena and their effects on urban life. Based on this, urbanity is now considered a concept of form with which processes of materialization, temporalization, and spatialization can be observed in specific, city-related contexts (Rau 2020). These processes are by no means limited to urban space. Urbanity thus emerges as a characteristic or enabling condition of a particular way of life through attribution, comparison, discursive negotiation, or in spatiotemporal practices. It is concerned with the respective interplay of spatial configurations, spatiotemporal practices, ideas and perceptions, as well as descriptions of oneself or of others. In this openness, the term allows object-language or meta-linguistic terms of other cultural and linguistic traditions to have an epistemic function, from *ville* to *village* and *polis* to *nāgara*.[5]

An academic study can build on this historical use of the term (Rau 2020). Accordingly, the starting point is *not* the term urbanization, which describes urbanization in quantitative terms and refers to the founding of more and more cities and their growth in terms of space and people (in pre-modern times especially linked to an influx of people). Once again sharpening our focus, we propose emphasizing the social character of urban space by foregrounding the concept of urbanity in all processes of urbanization, despite the narrow semantic range of *urbanity* in its non-academic English usage (Rau and Rüpke 2020, Rüpke and Rau 2020). Thus, it is not to fulfil lists of parameters, as in Childe, but the practical or even conceptual attribution of a specifically ‘urban’

[4] The concept of urbanity in its post-ancient, Romance and Germanic derivatives of the Latin *urbanitas* was not only used to describe the prosocial aspects of high education (wit, esprit), but also to reflect on the necessary conditions for successful coexistence and a good life in urban space (Rau 2011).

[5] In South Asian studies, the Sanskrit term *nāgara* has often been used as the counterpart of *grāma*, the rural settlement or village. Thus, *nāgara* generally refers to a town or a city, and *nāgaraka* to the inhabitant of a town or a cultured man (Hartmann 2017). However, epigraphical and literary sources show that a great variety of terms was used from the second urbanisation period onwards (from the sixth century BC) for urban settlements. The Sanskrit term *Rāja-dhānī* translates into capital or court city, *pattana* to market place/port town, and *pura* to small fort. The Persian term *śahar* was commonly used for Sultanate and Mughal cities from 13th century onwards.

character to a settlement by historical actors that transforms a built environment into a 'city' and also qualifies practices as 'urban' that are no longer bound to urban space.

Urbanity as a practice and strategy transforming material and social arrangements into something 'urban' consists of ideas, narratives and symbols of the urban, of media practices and spatially anchored urban behaviors. It also covers institutions and agents that seek to ensure an urban character. Propelled by these, long-term processes occur which can be summarized as urbanization, the expansion of urban spaces, or as an increasing network of settlements qualified as 'cities'. In an extreme case, a settlement of a few hundred people is thus understood as, lived in and treated as a city – both by its inhabitants and by interested observers. At the other end of the scale, massive assemblages of people and built space can be denied the qualification as 'urban'. Outsiders have repeatedly qualified everyday life in slums, including religious practices, as 'coarse', 'uneducated'. In contrast to this, local actors, such as the *urban poor,* perceive their environment as an expression of urban identity and an urbane sense of life (Fuchs 2016, 2021). In other words: urbanization as an increase in the number of cities or urban space does not necessarily go hand in hand with a parallel increase in urbanity in (current as well as historical) judgments.

Our research shows that the concepts heterarchy and co-spatiality open up particularly interesting avenues for analyzing and explaining the interrelations between religion and urbanity. In our understanding, heterarchies are systems in which the constituent elements can be both potentially disordered and differently arranged (Crumley 2015). The concept has proven fruitful in analyses for describing and comparing the complex constellations and lines of development of religious and urban change. In both archaeology and historiography, the concept describes states during the transformation of relational or power structures between actors. It also captures the formation of different parallel or simultaneous relations. It goes beyond a mere representation of the plurality and diversity of relations between actors and groups of actors, as became clear in the application of the case studies mentioned above. The fruitful application of the concept to the interaction of individual religious and urban authority bearers in the first phase suggests that the analytical access gained, which only does justice to the complexity of the facts, should also be applied to heterarchical constellations of groups.

Corresponding to the nexus of authority and heterarchy, the application of co-spatiality (Lévy 2008, Lévy 2021b) has made the shaping of cities through claims on the design, use and description of spaces and the resulting complexity of the interaction of religious and urban practices, spaces and ideas more visible and comparable. Co-spatiality (*cospatialité*) describes the interconnection of overlapping levels or their prevention and is thus an essential indicator of a society's capacity for communal coexistence. Co-spatialities are based on complex interactions that go beyond the mere overlapping of social appropriations of the urban (Löw 2015). All actors, both urban and non-urban, pursue, more or less reflexively and with varying degrees of tangibility, highly divergent urbanization strategies, out of which very different urbanities develop analogously. Especially for spatializations in the economic and especially mercantile profiling of cities, the approach of grasping the interplay of religion and urbanity in its complexity proves to be particularly fruitful and requires a corresponding focus for the subsequent phase.

## 1.4 Structure

As mentioned above, this article contains two main sections. Each part evolves around sets of questions contained in heuristic grid already mentioned above. This grid intentionally separates the analysis of the formation of religion and urbanity in order to work out the reciprocal influences, factors and processes in their respective formation. The proposed sets of questions attempt at summarizing a large amount of research which we have personally conducted or which we present in a new perspective. The questions are applicable also to other cities. With them, we seek to uncover the importance of religion and urbanity more generally. The results collected below do (and can) not aim to provide a comprehensive or even complete overview of the reciprocal formation of religion and urbanity in the past 3000 years in South Asia, the Mediterranean, and Europe. Rather, we take a closer look to those examples, which help to grasp those dimensions that show similarities and differences in the interaction between religion and urbanity.

In the first section, we discuss how religion changed urbanity, while in the second we turn to urbanity changing religion. How religion changed urbanity foregrounds the multiple ways by which religious factors triggered transformations in the spatialization, materialization, discourses (on), and performance of urbanity throughout the history of cities, from their (re)foundations to abandonments via urban growths and urban crises. The second section deals with urban socio-spatial realms that were shaping religion in terms of spaces, practices, media of communication and discourses.

By presenting cross regional (from Europe, the Mediterranean basin and South Asia) and cross-temporal (from proto-urban to contemporary times) case studies in such a two-fold approach we seek to elucidate the concept and application of the reciprocal formation of religion and urbanity and propose it as an instrument of research to the readers. The ordering of the case studies within these two sections does not follow a pre-set chronological or geographical organization. Rather, it is the generality and momentousness of phenomena and processes observed that structure both sections.

# 2 Religion Changes Urbanity

In our doubled approach to historical change, this section foregrounds the multiple ways by which religious factors, from certain practices through agents and ideas to architecture and organizations, triggered transformations in the spatialization, materialization, discourses (on), and performance of urbanity throughout the history of cities, from their (re)foundations to abandonments via urban growths and urban crises.

We begin by

- considering the role of religious practices and narratives on city foundations and boundaries in the production and legitimation of urban space, and by
- illustrating how religiously and economically conditioned migration to cities, resulting in religious plurality and diversity, activated diverse spatial strategies of re-ordering urban space (integration, segmentation, ghettoization, peri-urbanization).

We then cover religious influences on experiencing and performing urbanity by

- focusing on how religious practices and associations intensified regulated or claimed urban space.

Also, we are interested in how religion materialized through

- foundations of monumental and small-scale places of religious communication as well as
- the spread of new religious values and concepts. Changes on the city skyline and topography thus correlate with the transformation of how urbanity was performed, displayed, and imagined.

We conclude this section by

- dealing with the role of religious factors in both urban resilience and in temporarily interruptions of urban order.

## 2.1 City (re)foundations

*What role did religious practices play in city (re)foundation? How does the choice of the location for religious communication, votive deposits and founding rituals create urban space and legitimacy?*

Religion has been a pivotal factor for dramatic transformations in and of cities – be it during their foundation, times of growth and inward migration or during fundamental disruptions, at times leading as far as genocide. Religious rituals at all stages served to create commonalities, to enable individual and collective spaces of refuge and to manage co-habitation. Imaginaries of ‘gods’ and deceased ‘forebears’, of places of veneration, of access to the gods via ‘their’ temples but also of divine consequence to everyday life and demands to how one should conduct this everyday life, affected and were affected by (proto-)urban spaces and constellations in and from which they developed (Rau and Rüpke 2022).

Breaking the soil in order to commit bodies or objects to it – and doing so as an intentional act of religious communication – was by no means limited to the Bronze and Iron Age Mediterranean, as archaeological finds in the valley of the river Swat in present-day Pakistan (Iori 2021b). These finds originate from the second century BCE during which the systematic political and economic

re-organization of the so-called 'Indo-Greek' kingdom involved a process of city re-foundations that entailed the introduction of a new concept of the city and living in the city, as well as new administrative structures, legal competences, and city boundaries. The construction of imposing city walls based on Hellenistic models reified this new conceptualization and role of the urban within the nascent political and economic system. Therefore, rituals associated to city walls did connect to the city itself.

For instance, the ritual deposit associated to the construction of the Indo-Greek city wall at the city of Barikot in north-western Pakistan was probably linked to a 'violation' of the boundary with the past which occurred by the exposure of earlier structures during the levelling work carried out for the construction of the urban defense. Artefacts and bodies thus accidentally disclosed – a protohistoric pot and a partially disarticulated corpse of a woman – were then re-deposited in a pit below the city wall. A ritual sacrifice of a dog then sealed off this re-deposit. This sacrifice was probably enacted with the aim of (re)fixing the boundary with the 'past' or ancestors and, at the same time, connecting them to the foundation of the city wall and to what was going to be enclosed by it, the city. Moreover, the possible use of this deposit as a physical reference point for drawing the southern line of the new city wall starting from its western corner may evoke the north Indian practice, described in the contemporary Laws of Manu, of burying ritual deposits in order to practically and legally define boundaries.

The foundation ritual at Barikot is linked to the ancient Indian 'anxiety' to fixing and maintaining boundaries between real and imagined spaces - as it emerges from the most ancient Indian texts concerning ritual, moral, spatial and legal matters (Squarcini 2019). The ritual deposit sealed by the sacrifice of the dog as a purifying agent seems to have been the urban dweller's technique of negotiation. They had diverse cultural and religious backgrounds in this new multi-cultural city that, after being at the fringe of the Hellenistic economic network for almost two centuries, was by then fully accustomed to the Greco-Iranic environment. In other words, the final aim of the ritual deposit was to legitimise and appropriate the new urban space.

Results from research on the emergence of urban settlements in the Mediterranean basin suggest the pervasiveness of ritual practices during both the evolution and the growth of said settlements. The great variety in arrangement and elaboration of burial sites throughout the Mediterranean region and north of the Alps nevertheless points to the underlying tendency of burial rituals being reserved for privileged social groups and linked to their agenda of communal cohesion (Rüpke 2018a).[6]

Analyzing how and why cities were delineated – be it topographically with boundary walls, religiously with deposits/rituals, and processions linked to architectural structures or temporally with foundation narratives – has emerged as a salient research avenue for *Religion and Urbanity* and its interest in changes of urban and religious activity across regions and epochs. Human acts of delineation frequently entailed and expressed religious agency and imaginations, which in turn could change or solidify what a city physically was and meant. Such “work” on the city was most

[6] Discussed also in contributions to Religion and Urbanity Online for the sites and places of Gabii, Archaic Latium, Manching, the South Etruscan city-state Caere, Nineveh, and others. (Naglak 2020, Smith 2020, Fazio 2021, Fernández-Götz 2021, Moser 2021, Neumann 2021b, Riva 2021, Winger 2021). The contributions were gathered in the framework of the international conference “Blurring Boundaries in 2021. For the closing comments see (Rau and Fuchs 2021).

likely rooted in the need to perform urbanity because of the fact that perceptions of a city's urbanity could and did differ significantly among inhabitants, visitors and external observers alike.

The same accounts for ancient Rome, where intellectuals repeatedly re-narrated the legend of the founding of Rome to deepen their understanding of the city and its significance to their worldview. Most of the narrations share the same symbolism that Romulus used an older Etruscan ritual when founding the city of Rome, which was creating a line around the city´s territory with a plough. The *fossa* (ditch) or *pomerium* marked the sacred area of the city, where special prohibitions applied, such as the appearance of armed military or the letting in of foreign envoys. Peregrine cities were not allowed to draw their own *pomerium*, because it marked out a city as having a privileged status, which included the right to take auspices or other eminent augural activities. Interestingly, in republican and imperial times the sacred boundary was an intangible instrument that structured not only the city but also specific activities in it (Gesemann 2003). The most important aspect was that people could not bury or cremate people inside the *pomerium.* This became a challenge for the inhabitants as the city grew and the distance to the necropolises increased. Just because an intangible border was enlarged, the inhabitants did not abandon their practices. The refusal to obey laws explains the erection of monumental pillars, so-called *cippi* reminding the public of the laws.

As city foundations and their narrative reiterations constitute the identity of cities and their inhabitants, it is not surprising that the ancient city of Rome developed over the course of time and its evolution to a globally acting, and later imperial, superpower more than one, but three different mythological narrations (Grandazzi 1997, Wiseman 2013). The Palatine became sacralized in a way that continues to this day (Hofmann and Lätzer-Lasar 2021) by means of a three-fold process. First, by reifying the narrations through constructing presumably original places (house of Romulus, cave of the She-wolf). Second, by naming monuments with names deriving from the different myths (*scalae Caci*). Third, by repeatedly designing religious places (Mater Magna temple, Temple of Faunus) in this area that are strongly connected to the myth or even integrated into the narration at a later point. In turn, the palimpsest place identity of the Palatine impacted significantly on the city planning in this area, transforming the hill into a place for "urban nostalgia" (Graebner 2007, Clewell 2013).

## 2.2 Urban growth and development

*Are there religious reasons for voluntary or forced mobility feeding urban growth (push and pull factors of migration, pilgrimage)? How is the resulting religious diversity dealt with in the urban context (segmentation/ghettoization, coexistence)?*

Admittedly, these questions have particular prominence for our topic and need to be given careful consideration. While a range of factors can lead to urban growth – for example an increase in the birth rate, medical advances. In this part, we focus on religiously induced migration to cities as a key factor of urban growth and development. This resulted in an increase of local religious diversity and issues related to this, as our case studies from the early modern period in Europe (Lyon, Hamburg and Altona, London) and South Asia (Calicut), present-day India (Dharavi in Mumbai) and Barikot (north-west Pakistan) in the second and third century CE show. In doing so, the specific religious context needs to be taken into account, esp. when analyzing the strategies

and practices of elite actors. In the case of early modern Europe, the spread of confessionalization went alongside processes of state formation. This combination could lead to and fueled religiously motivated expulsions and ‘flights’ of whole communities. On the other side, members of religious minorities could be afforded special rights and privileges upon settling in new places – most often by rulers seeking their settlement within already existing cities, as the examples of Altona and Hamburg shows.

In contrast to this, our South Asian studies on religiously induced migration and urban growth speak rather of religious factors being of a secondary nature to economic considerations – or at least being concurrent with these.

With regard to the pluri-religious setting in Swat/Uddyiana in the second and third centuries, very little material evidence from religious activities in the pre-Buddhist phase in northwestern Pakistan has survived. What we know is that there were religious places outside cities run by local ‘Dardic’ communities (Olivieri 2015). With the incoming Buddhist communities, what emerged was a situation of an overlapping of spiritually charged landmarks of mountain communities and religious sites. Buddhist in-migration to the region was linked to missionary activities of Buddhist communities from northwestern India – especially towards and in regions thought to being economically promising, i.e. along trade routes and around larger cities. The case of Buddhist migration is therefore a prime example of economic and religious motivations going hand in hand when urban Buddhist actors decide where to found new monasteries. In the case of Calicut, Arab merchants were drawn to settling along the Malabar coast – however not for religious reasons but for their nautical skills. In the 13th century, they were explicitly invited to settle in a predetermined section of the city – including sites reserved for the construction of mosques – based on their economic and technological skills.
Similar to these two early examples of migrating religious groups, immigration to the modern Indian slum of Dharavi is propelled mainly by economic factors. The absence of centralized city planning, a series of post-independence agrarian crises, and the post-colonial legacy of a comparably small working class propelled mass migration (*Landflucht*) to urban settlements (Lucassen and Lucassen 2018). Once they arrived in the cities, people settled there in a manner fundamentally different to that of their European counterparts, as will be shown (Lucassen and Lucassen 2018). Since realizing that pre-modern societies were also spatially mobile and that mobility and migration were no exception even before 1800, historical research since around the 1990s has increasingly devoted itself to the comparatively everyday migration (of workers, journeymen and soldiers). As a result, a more balanced picture of early modern mobility gradually emerged, the reasons for which were, of course, also wars, famine, natural disasters, political oppression and religious exclusion (Lucassen 2013). To some extent, migration and urbanization research were also linked, insofar as immigration from outside was a significant factor in the demographic development of cities; conversely, cities also exerted a strong attraction on migrants. In general, it is difficult to say how much religion, work, education or nutrition played a role in this. Quantitative research, however, has now made it possible to draw an approximate picture of political and religious refugees in Europe between 1500 and 1800.

Here, however, it must be specified that religiously conditioned, but often politically motivated, migration did not begin with the Reformation (Terpstra 2015) in the early 16th century, but earlier: the expulsion of Jews from France in the 14th century and from Spain at the end of the 15th century are striking examples here. Another strand of research that has considered the

religious motivations behind migration are conversion studies, when converts left a territory in order to exercise their religion or confession freely in another region (Ó hAnnracháin 2005). For a differentiated view, especially with regard to the effects of religious mobility, the settlement of religious groups in cities, their visibility in urban space and their social integration, there is no way around more in-depth studies.

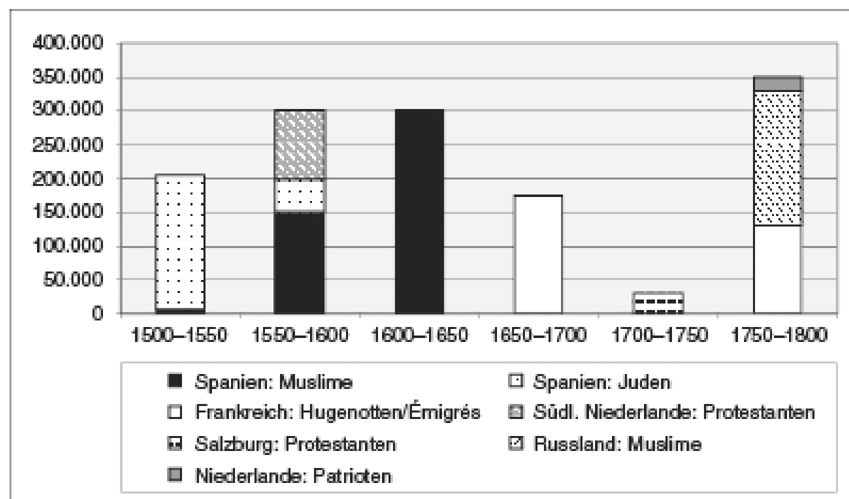


*Figure 1: Religious and political refugees in Europe, 1500–1800. The listed countries refer to the respective places of departure* (Lucassen and Lucassen 2018)

In this context, Lucassens' chart on religious and political refugees (Figure 1) depicts two salient points. First, post-Reformation processes of confessionalization – that is the wish for religious unity in a given territory – often tied in with incipient processes of state formation; both leading to the expulsion of larger groups (and their corresponding reception elsewhere). Second, religio-political expulsions occur way into the 18th century, beginning with the period of Reformation. Crucially, is not continuous bur rather takes place in waves. In other words, not everybody was affected by religiously induced (forced) migration and there were various waves of expulsion across early modern Europe, each affecting other groups.

Research on confessionalization has covered the phenomenon of religious migration, but, interestingly, with limited reference to towns and even less to urban space these groups created or used (Bahlcke 2008, Jürgens and Weller 2010, for a modern perspective see Severin-Barboutie 2016). Since we started from the hypothesis that religion played an essential role in the formation of cities, from their foundations via waves of immigration and subsequent transformations to (re-)ghettoization and genocide (Rau and Rüpke 2020), we take a fresh look at the spatial practices of religious immigrants. It is hardly surprising that religious migrants went to places where the sovereign or city council granted them religious freedom; but it is also not surprising that the new places provided them with living space (territory or housing) and not infrequently also economic privileges. Where they did not have to be re-allocated, newcomers could benefit from what their predecessors had already negotiated. The communicative networks of the diaspora communities among themselves played a role in this, as Evelyne Oliel-Grausz has studied for the Sephardic Jews.[7]

7See https://www.cairn.info/revue-archives-juives1-2014-2-page-4.htm

At Hamburg, Dutch Calvinists and French Huguenots not only contributed to the city’s prosperity through their wealth and commercial expertise, but in return also received more extensive privileges than the other religious minorities of the city (Whaley 1992). Yet the example of this strongly Lutheran city equally shows that there were economic as well as religious motives for Jewish, Calvinist, Huguenot and Mennonite exiles to settle here. The same point is strongly emphasized by Klaus Weber for the central role of Huguenots in the trade with plantation products from the (French) Caribbean (Weber 2010). Where they failed to integrate into existing ecclesiastical structures, religious refugees built their own churches, chapels or synagogues, which provides a first example of changing urban space (For the following part see Rau 2022b). Analytically speaking, there are three main scenarios:

1. Small numbers of migrants spread over several districts, resulting in a slightly denser population without much change in urban space.

2. Groups of relatively homogenous migrants arrive within a short timeframe and settle together in a certain street, neighborhood or extramural area, perhaps even a new part of the town, prompting highly visible changes to urban space. Newly founded settlements were not only a distinct type of early modern city, but also particularly attractive for immigrants. Here, newcomers enjoyed special privileges ranging from tax rebates and exemptions from civic duties (such as military service) to religious freedom. The port of Livorno as well as Erlangen near Nuremberg or Hanau near Frankfurt, where the new town (‘Neustadt’) catered for Calvinists and Jewish settlers, provide relevant examples.

3. Sustained inflows of (individual / collective) migrants fuel strong population growth, causing a city to burst at the seams. Once there are no more spaces to be filled with new or larger houses, urban planners have to relocate city walls and / or cross natural boundaries. In eighteenth-century Lyon, for example, houses were built on the other side of the Rhône, the traditional urban border (Rau 2013)[8]; while nineteenth-century Barcelona saw the emergence of the *Ensanche* (cat. *eixample*), a completely new extension to the town.

The growth of Altona shows a special development that is worth looking at in detail. Until the Greater Hamburg Act in 1937, Altona did not belong to Hamburg and for a long time was visibly, that means geographically, separate. Altona is interesting in terms of trade history and religious history, because it was a counterpoint to Hamburg in both respects. In a religion-and-urbanity-perspective, we could say that the foundation itself had nothing to do with religion, but the later development of the city all the more so. For the city was a place of refuge for Reformed, Catholics and Jews in the early modern period, and at times groups could also form there that were called separatists by the established denominations. Therefore, a brief recall of the history of Altona from the fishing village to its incorporation in 1937: In the beginning, there was neither a sanctuary nor a temple of what later became Altona, but a so-called “Krug”, that is an inn, around which a small settlement developed in the 16th century, in which mainly fishermen and craftsmen lived. In 1536, the settlement is mentioned for the first time in the sources, whose name – “all to

8 Lyon’s rapid development in the 19th century ‘beyond’ the Rhone can be easily understood by comparing the map of 1845 with a map of circa 1886: *Lyon pittoresque et monumental*, ed. Félix Devaux, Lyon 1886 (Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon), URL: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lyon_pittoresque_et_monumental.jpg [7.2.2021].

na" – is either a description of the location or refers to the river Altenau (Berlage 1937, Ramm 1967, Brandenburg 2000). In addition, there were already five farms or manors.

Since the beginning of the 17th century, a series of sovereigns pursued a regular settlement policy. It began with Count Ernst von Schauenburg, who raised the village to the status of a small town or hamlet (in German a *Flecken*) and gave religious minorities the opportunity to settle and build places of worship. At that time, rural places were elevated to the status of *Flecken* if they were known for their trade or if they were intended to attract further craftsmen. They enjoyed a reduced town privilege; mostly they received a market privilege. In 1611/12, the so-called *Freiheit* (freedom) was created in Altona, a quarter in which unrestricted freedom of religion and trade prevailed. The street names *Große* and *Kleine Freiheit* still remind us of this quarter today, even though it was destroyed twice in the meantime and had to be rebuilt, once in 1713 and again during the Second World War (Rau 2021). In the first half of the 17th century, the two districts in Altona had different trade laws: in the northern part (around the *Freiheit*), guild coercion was abolished, while it still applied in the older, southern part.

After Altona had passed to the Danish-Norwegian King as Duke of Holstein in 1640, it was granted city rights with extensive privileges by King Frederick III in 1664 (who had ruled since 1648). The decisive factors here were the freedom of worship and trade (that means without guilds and therefore without the need to join one when settling in the city). In the course of implementing this privilege, the older guilds were also abolished, thus creating a unified urban area in terms of trade law (Berlage 1937). Both rights were by no means implicit for a European city at that time, and they contributed decisively to the demographic growth.

As far as the demographic development is concerned, it can be assumed that 3,000 people lived in Altona in 1650. Due to the deliberate settlement policy, the number of inhabitants quadrupled by the beginning of the 18th century (1710: approx. 12,000), decreased by 1,000 during the plague years from 1712 to 1714 and then doubled again to 24,000 inhabitants by 1800.[9] Although these are only estimates, it is evident that the 24,000 inhabitants also needed significantly more living space. The city therefore also had to grow in terms of space, which, however, still happened hesitantly in the second half of the 17th century: at that time, new housing was built in the area between Kleine Freiheit and Große Johannisstraße as well as in the area of Schmiedestraße and Vossenstraße (Berlage 1937).

It must also be noted that demographic and spatial urban development during this period did not follow crystal-clear religious motives. Rather, it resulted from a combination of religious and commercial interests. While the decision of migrants to leave their homeland in the 16th and 17th centuries was often religiously motivated, the recruitment policy of the counts and kings consciously combined religious with commercial freedoms. The counts of Schauenburg had already been on the lookout for specific artisans who were needed in Altona – saddlers, halter makers, sail makers and shipbuilders. Some members of these trades settled in Altona without specific religious motives but because they could work there without being a member of a guild. Motives for settlement were often situational and migrating actors were well able to use the political situation to their advantage. Once the immigrants came together and formed as a

[9] These are approximate figures based on estimates and projections. To date, the church books have yet to be analysed. Roughly ten percent of Altona's population was Jewish. (Brandenburg 2000).

religious group, they also began to organize their religious practices, constructing places of gathering and taking care of where they could remain after their death.

The prominence of religious push and pull factors in migration varies greatly according to the specific (epochal and/or regional/local) circumstances of a person moving, in both the past and present. Spatial (and temporal) strategies of dealing with the fallout of people migrating to and between cities, however, lend themselves to comparison more easily. Returning to Early Modern cities in Europe, different strategies of dealing with religious diversity and/or migration can be observed in the segmentation of burial spaces. It was possible for burial spaces to be reserved for certain groups of people as well as for migrants to establish their own burial spaces upon settlement in the city. Depending on the specific cases and times, attempts to integrate newcomers and multiple confessions were possible, but also distinct moves to enforce separation (Christ 2022a). This changed the outline of the city itself, as the placement of burial spaces in the center or on the periphery were important.

One of the most striking examples for urban growth in the early modern period is London, where we can observe migration on all levels: from the surrounding countryside, other parts of England, the British Isles, Europe, and beyond (see Ackroyd 2000, White 2012, Lincoln 2021). Between 1550 and 1750, the town expanded from c. 80.000 inhabitants to over 700.000 (Newton 2022). One reason that contributed to this urban migration and growth was religion. From the surrounding countryside, villages and other British towns, men and women came to London to follow their religion or experience the urban diversity. Parts of London became known for containing certain religious groups, for example a Jewish part, which was also recognized as such by contemporaries (Vine 2018). From 1547, exiles established stranger churches in London, which provided a religious home to migrants from the Low Countries, France, and Protestant parts of the Holy Roman Empire, and other regions of Europe (Pettegree 1986, Spicer 2012).

London’s significant population of religious migrants led to an exchange of ideas and practices and turned the metropolis into one of the most diverse urban settlements of the early modern period. Many migrants worked in specific trades, resulting in quarters renowned for a certain religious, economic and national outlook. The presence of diplomats and emissaries at the court contributed further to this already complex situation. While they were not citizens of the town, their presence nonetheless added to the religious diversity as well as growth of London. Besides an intellectual, material and personal exchange, the plurality of beliefs also led to significant tensions. After the Reformation, many of these issues revolved around the supposed disloyalty towards England connected to Catholicism, as was the case with migrants from Spain or France (Morton 2021). The significant growth of London meant that religious plurality was an important feature of the metropolis and it resulted in different groups occupying different quarters or houses. This establishment of different national and religious groups in London, in turn, could encourage further migration to the city. Religion, it should be stressed, was only one reason for migrants to come to London, alongside economic or political factors. The inter-play between these motivations to come to London illustrates how economic, religious and political aspects came together in urban settings.

Migration to and between cities is a main driving factor of urban diversification. In our view, understanding this key aspect of urbanity – together with its sibling processes co-spatialization and differentiation – is advanced by analyzing moments of change to the heterachical system which orders relations between (diverse types of) individual actors and actors

groups/organizations in cities (Urciuoli 2022). The evolving nature of such heterarchies translates into the necessity of narrating stories of how a city came to be, always adapting to the current socio-political and religious demands at the time of (re-)telling, as the plurality of Roman foundation myths show (Rüpke 2021a). At the same time, human appropriation of urban spaces can be seen as a way of dealing with and successfully navigating the denseness, otherness and complexity characteristic for urbanity. In addition, appropriating spaces is a strategy of satisfying the basic needs of communication (with other humans and the divine), bodily reproduction and safety – needs frequently entangled with each other and formulated, experienced and practically met by religious practice, belief and association. As such, the motivations behind spatial appropriation arguably relate to those informing religious guides to urban life, to which the discussion will return at a later stage (2e, below).

We find a similar situation of religious plurality as in Altona in South India. This region was not integrated into the Mughal Empire in the Middle Ages; rather, it is typically characterized by a number of smaller principalities and kingdoms, some of which were able to acquire a prominent position (as trading hub) and thus eventually wealth as long-distance maritime trade developed. The territory of *Nediyirippu Swarupam* was one such kingdom ruled by a *zamorin* who had moved his residence to Kozhikode (Calicut) on the Malabar coast.

As far as urban growth and demographic development is concerned, the availability of data (before the start of the British administration) is unfortunately too thin for a number-based description of the development. But there are estimates from traders and other travelers that can give an impression of the size of the city: Originating on marshland, it was not until the 12th century that the place acquired a character that could be labelled urban (Narayanan 2018). As the city developed into a commercial center in the 13th century, it attracted a certain amount of attention, which also led to people describing the city. In the 14th century, travelers such as Ibn Battuta (1304-1368/69) and Niccolo de' Conti (c. 1395–1469) reported that Calicut was the largest trading center in South Asia. According to Conti, the Venetian merchant, the city had a circumference of eight miles.[10]

But unlike the flight movements in Europe, which were partly induced by religious motives and drove people of other faiths to other cities and countries, sometimes even as far as North America, the history of immigration to Calicut can hardly be traced back to religious motives. The immigration (and thus the expansion of the city) primarily followed economic motives. The *cheras*, who ruled southwestern India for a long time, had already established trade relations across the Arabian Sea. Muslim traders from other parts of the world were also allowed to settle here – temporarily or permanently (Gurukkal and Raghava 2018). The construction of a mosque (Muchundippalli, 13th century) for Friday prayers and the gradual emergence of a separate Muslim quarter in the southwest of the city are a sign of their integration. Their settlement took place under the patronage of the *zamorin*, who conversely expected customs and tax revenues from it, because he too knew that it was the (foreign) Muslims who controlled the highly profitable

[10] Conti wrote of "Calicut, a maritime city, eight miles in circumference, a noble emporium for all India, abounding in pepper, lac, ginger, a larger kind of cinnamon, myrobolans, and zedoary." (Conti 1921, p. 20). Here, Conti uses the Roman mile *millibus passuum*, which equals 1482 m. Correspondingly, 15th century Calicut had a land surface of 1118 hectares. In comparison, 15th century Erfurt had a surface area of 244 hectares; Lyon in the 18th century covered 364 hectares.

long-distance trade in spices (Pearson 1988, Bouchon 1989). Accordingly, the Muslim settlement stimulated the further development of Calicut into an urban trade center. João de Barros, the historian of Portuguese colonial expansion, estimated that around 1500 there were about four thousand Muslim households in Calicut; Ludovico de Varthema in about the same time claimed there were 15,000 Muslim inhabitants (Varthema 1996).

Muslims thus contributed decisively to urban growth, wealth and religious diversity in Calicut. Apart from them, also other merchant groups settled in certain streets of the city (near the bazaar) and constructed their own places for religious practices. This diversity was definitely visible in the urban space. Many travel writers of the time – Ma Huan, Ludovico de Varthema, François Pyrard – described the city as divided into two parts: the mercantile quarter located on the sea side (more religiously diverse) and the royal quarter in the hinterland (with the Tali Temple dedicated to Shiva, one of the principal deities of what was later called Hinduism).

The history of the emergence of the large and internationally prominent slum of Dharavi in the center of Mumbai is less one of religious push and pull than of economic motivation and as such a reflection of the situation of the urban poor in contemporary India. The plurality of sustained in-migration to Dharavi, nurtured by strong network connections to the rural regions of origin, can nowadays be observed in the slum's religiously as well as linguistically highly diverse population. The reasons for migration to the city are economic – the search for sources of livelihood – and not religious as the majority of the urban poor belong to the lower castes and the lower rungs of Muslims. The only ones whose migration had religious reasons – just a handful of cases – are a few religious specialists (two earlier Shivnarayani *babas*, two or three Tamilian Brahman priests of two *Adi Dravida* temples, sometimes a visiting *mahant*, like in the case of the *kabirpanthis*, as well as an occasional Buddhist *bhikkhu* – such religious specialists are the exception in Dharavi). Most (caste and/or religious) groups, however, brought their previous religious affiliations with them and established shrines, temples, *gurudwara*s, *vihara*s, mosques, churches or other Christian places of worship or community centers, some of these relatively larger ones, most however small, one-room or open structures (Fuchs 2005, field notes, Fuchs 2016).

Caste communities, many linked to one dominant religious affiliation, frequently show a clustered pattern of residence while not necessarily being fully segregated. Other quarters or wards have ethnically, caste- and religion-wise mixed residents. Muslims, especially those originating from northern India and here particularly Uttar Pradesh, have shown a strong tendency to segregate and cluster after the 1992/93 anti-Muslim pogroms. The political use of religion makes religious belonging suddenly meaningful in ways this had not been the case before in this iconic slum (Chatterji and Mehta 2007, Fuchs 2018). Another cluster is that of Dharavi's original inhabitants, Koli fisherpeople. Here a small shrine with an aniconic deity – Kambha Devi – is situated apart from their current village-like cluster surrounded by the sprawling slum. Otherwise, religious sites have been established as the slum grew and developed – much of which had been mangrove swamps incrementally filled in with garbage by the municipality and through the work undertaken by the new migrants themselves (Fuchs 2021). As already mentioned, migrants continue and develop trans-urban networks to the religious centers in their home regions, depending on their (original) religious affiliations.

We have investigated the nexus of migration, religion and cities not only through ethnography as in the case of Dharavi, but also through material objects. Archaeological evidence from northwestern India points to fundamental spatial re-orderings caused by the migration of

religious experts and subsequently structured by urban techniques of managing the ensuing increase of diversity. Buddhist monasteries, from their first appearance around the mid-third to second century BCE onward, spread across rural areas according two recurrent spatial patterns, determined by urban dynamics, that can be defined as ‘road-network sprawl’ and ‘land resources-oriented sprawl’, with the exception to hermitages (‘forest monasteries’) or places allegedly associated to the life of the Buddha.[11]

Between the mid-first to third century CE, in the district of Barikot (Swat valley, northwestern Pakistan) the engagement of the urban society with the monastic community involved intense patronage of urban elites towards the Buddhist foundations established in the valleys facing the city. Although farming sites built with perishable materials may have existed in earlier period when fertile rural land was already exploited for surplus production, no structural evidence prior to the 1st century C.E. survived in this area with the exception of three settlements located on the hillsides immediately south-west of Barikot (Olivieri and Vidale 2006). Therefore, the Buddhist monastic communities – referred to as *saṃgha* – seem to be the first community to settle in permanent structures in the district of Barikot and the driving force behind the development of rural settlements on the hillside and construction of water infrastructures (dams, water reservoirs, wells, tanks). The spatial distribution of these sites suggests that the ordering of the agrarian space around the city of Barikot was connected to the multi-tiered settlement pattern of Buddhist communities. These played a role in the management of the natural resources and the fertile land of the countryside by functioning as a human infrastructure, a well-organized hierarchical community with writing and computing skills and the ability to plan, administrate and supervise a wide range of activities (Olivieri and Vidale 2006, Olivieri and Iori 2021). The geographical displacement of the *saṃgha* outside the city wall, based on religious ideas, did not preclude Buddhist community to engage with the urban and to shape economic, social and religious assets of the urban actors. Indeed, a peri-urban area was formed which provided the ground for not only the economic wealth of urban actors, but also for the materialization of the authority of urban donors into physical reality by the foundation of personal stupas and monuments through which social inequalities were reproduced or challenged outside the city (Iori 2021a). Although evidently differing from the city in terms of density, forms of dwellings and spatial extension, the peri-urban area should be considered a specific socio-spatial setting of the urban constellation based on a countryside-city system.

Upon consideration of the above, it becomes clear that religious motivations did not fuel immigration to cities exclusively. In most cases, city immigration was – and continues to be – a mix of interlinking push-and pull factors, of which economic considerations are surely the most prominent. After arrival, the modes and spatial distribution of settlement of the newcomers was frequently organized along religious lines – e.g. in Dharavi according to caste membership or, as the early modern cases discussed above have shown, based on privileges granted by city rulers.

[11] The term urban *sprawl* describes the process of urbanisation of areas outside contemporary growing cities. Causes, socio-economic settings, ecological effects and spatial configurations of the so-called peri-urban areas change case by case.

## 2.3 Formation of urbanity

*What are the religious practices and conceptions for the appropriation of lived space? How is such space temporarily, permanently or exclusively developed as a religious space? Which role did religion play in the formation of neighborhoods? How did power structures within neighborhoods change as a result?*

In ancient Roman cities, the density, complexity, but often also uniformity of the spaces of sleeping and working was a challenge to inhabitants and other users of urban spaces. Beyond appropriating their surroundings during and through everyday life, people engaged in religious practices in many of these spaces – across the periods and religions scrutinized by us. Religious practices 'at home' (often also a primary space of production), at places of labor, at the roadside or in open spaces are attested, as is the involvement of actors from all segments of society. Miniature installations or ephemeral rituals leave accumulating, even if not necessarily permanent, material or mnemonic traces (Rüpke 2018a). The reflexivity of religious ritual (Rüpke 2021b), we suggest, serves as an intensifier of spatial experiences and appropriation of such places. Religious practices like processions and literary discourses relate the rather fragmented episodes and spaces touched upon above to an encompassing concept of urbanity because they overlap and interconnect diverse spaces and experiences within them (Lätzer-Lasar 2022a).

For ancient Rome, we could identify such practices on the neighborhood level as well as in intra-urban networks of individuals around the Mediterranean from the Hellenistic period through Late Antiquity (Maier and Urciuoli 2020, Rüpke 2020b).[12] Early Christ believers were not the only ones appropriating spaces by names, narratives, and the formation of neighborhoods. The treatment of urban qualities and problems in literary texts and dedicated compositions in the phase of maximally rapid expansion in late republican and early imperial Rome is especially significant. Both types of text stress urban qualities from wastewater treatment and security to eroticism and noise (Rüpke 2019b, Rüpke 2021a). Urbanity, in all these cases, is rarely restricted to the city one happens to be in, but always entails notions of transport and import of goods (or persons) across borderlines. The complex coupling and decoupling of notions of urbanity and urban spaces that merits further investigation (e.g.Neumann 2021a). We also assume that temporal orders or rhythms (Stahl 2018) produced by religious practices and discourses will also impact on how urbanity is experienced and formulated (e.g. Rüpke 2020b).

In early modern Lyon, a dual system of neighborhood organization shaped the experience of one's immediate surroundings: parishes and *pennonages* (Rau 2018). The latter initially denoted urban militias brandishing a pennon – usually a thin or triangular banner, similar to naval pennants – that later evolved into fiscal units responsible for individual city districts (e.g. tax collection). Arguably, the *pennonages* were the first form of communal organization in Lyon, having organized the conflict against the lord of the city, the archbishop, in the 13th century. In addition to the *pennonages* – which affected such a considerable shift in the power structures of government of the city – Lyon's other religious associations played a major role for locally organizing civic or royal festivities (e.g. on royal marriages and births) as well as entrance processions of prestigious individuals to the city. While parish boundaries were rather stable – over time, their number would increase but not their territorial expanse in the city – *pennonage* boundaries were more

[12] Practices in the domestic context have also been studied in depth. This is, however, less the case for apartments or informal spaces of accommodation (e.g. (Bakker 1994); (Assmann et al. 2008).

variable. This was mainly because they evolved in correlation to the density of inhabitants. In other words, if the number of inhabitants in a neighborhood grew disproportionally, existing *pennonages* could be divided into two, or areas moved to other, smaller *pennonage*s. In the case of the *pennonages*, the changes to their territorial extent and membership reflected changes to the administrative framework of Lyon.

In addition to the formalized structures of organizing urban life which drew upon differentiations of the urban space along military and religious lines – *pennonages*, parishes and religious associations – Lyon’s inhabitants engaged also in an informal, spontaneous sociability. Such informality took place in the alleyways of houses, on the street or in taverns and did not necessarily correspond to the boundaries frameworks of parishes and *pennonages*. The co-existence of formal and informal systems in Lyon is remarkable because in many cities parishes and *pennonages* were spatially identical, e.g. Strasbourg and Hamburg. In other cities again, neighborhoods were formed after and based on negotiations of who constructed and repaired houses. Such a formation of neighborhoods from below has been illustrated for Prague by James Palmitessa’s work. In Lyon, it is, however, doubtful, whether this spatial reorganisation of co-habitation had an impact on relations of proximity.

Religious difference does not necessarily determine everyday life in dense neighborhoods, as research on the formation of religious spaces in contemporary Indian slums shows. A large slum like Dharavi (one million inhabitants from low class and lower caste backgrounds on 2.2 $km^2$) represents a strongly segregated area vis-à-vis the encompassing city. The slum tends to be rejected and stigmatized by many of Mumbai’s middle-class inhabitants, who would never enter the area. Towards the end of the 10th century, the settlement patterns of incoming migrants incrementally established wards and neighborhoods in the slum. Municipal agents only very partially directed this process. In the aftermath of the pogroms of 1992/93 some of the Muslims who did not leave Dharavi or did later return, resettled in other houses in other parts of the slum.

Residents established and used their own community-specific places of worship. Christian denominational affiliations also largely follow caste lines. In a few cases, including some of the Christian and Islamic denominations, Dharavi residents received help from outside religious institutions. Individually, some residents also visit other religious places in- and outside the slum, in the wider city as well as, at certain occasions, beyond the city. Individuals also visit the sites of religious traditions different from those ascribed to their community. Some of the temples in Dharavi that have gained special prominence – especially the Ganesh *mandir* of the Adi Dravidas – attract followers beyond the community in charge of the site.

Religious plurality has a long history in south Asia and is of no particular urban origin. However, the sheer number of diverse religious formations that coexist side-by-side in Dharavi is a phenomenon that is specific to a modern metropolitan city that receives migrants from the entire country. This also is the reason why its inhabitants proudly call it “mini-India”. The complexity and density of religious diversity in such a confined space as Dharavi even surpasses that of the city at large. Not only did Dharavi develop new modes of coexistence, life in the city also allows for an enlarged scope of individual choice or the combination of different religions. At the same time, the urban context enables and conditions conflict between religious groups and new forms of violence during crises. In Dharavi this so far occurred in a few instances only, and all of these have been incited by outside, urban and national, political forces. While in such moments even neighbors, who until this moment had lived together peacefully and shared everyday life, became

enemies, others organized cross-communal and cross-religious help and support structures. Insofar as such support was backed by religious feelings it was informed by the sense, explicitly voiced by residents of Dharavi, that all religions are to be considered as equal, each representing a different path to the same goal and each having some special strength (field notes, Fuchs 2005, Fuchs 2021).

## 2.4 Changes in urban topography and architecture

*Do religious factors provoke new (non-religious) architectural forms? How is religion involved in processes of monumentalization and dynamics concerning conspicuous changes of location?*

Applying the notion of the 'spatial fix' has proven to be a useful approach into how religion materializes in the urban space. The formula was coined in the early 1980s by the Marxist geographer David Harvey (1981; see also 2001) to designate capitalism's strategy of resolving its inner crises via producing space (mainly through urbanization), and tying of capital to place (i.e., the creation of built-up environments). Harvey's spatial fix also offers a theoretical framework for the processes of capital being fixed geographically and materialized in religious architectural projects. The case study of the struggle of Somnath, a significant pilgrimage and sacred city of medieval India, aptly illustrates this (Keller forthcoming-d). In the early eleventh century, the redistribution of wealth after the looting of the Somnath temple by Mahmud of Ghazni enabled the development of great architectural projects in Western India. Thus, religion in an urban context was both the agent of problematic capital accumulation (here the temple of Somnath and its complex management system) and the beneficiary of a crisis of capital (construction of temples and water spaces in the Solanki kingdom and in Saurashtra). Applied to long-term strategies of anchoring flowing entities to fixed space, the concept of 'spatial fix' helps to illuminate analogous programs and initiatives pursued by various urban agents in the domain of religion and throughout the history of religions.

For instance, early Christ believers criticized polytheism as a strategy of allocating, attaching, and securing gods to architectural containers. Much of this critique can be profitably approached as an assorted intellectual enterprise aiming at deconstructing polytheism's spatial fix as a veil and tool for producing and reproducing theological error. The countering, multifarious Christian polemic promoted an alternative religious knowledge and spatial imagination whose modes of appropriating and transcending concrete spaces negated the rationale of gluing divinities to places. Well-researched, recurring arguments against the production of cult images, the materialized spread of idolatry, and polytheist investments in temple building were thus conceptually re-framed to foreground and reassess their spatialized character. The spatial fix was constantly at stake in a plurality of discursive domains such as:

- the alternative between material and immaterial religion
- the promotion of a different and more advantageous way of investing capitals in religious matters
- the implications of a maximalist anti-idolatrous preaching on the urban job market
- the critique of the polytheists' way of distributing and allotting spaces among the gods.

Instead of isolated pieces of confrontational rhetoric, these are all samples of a more or less coordinated exercise in attacking, denying, and exploding the very logic of the fix that makes a

materialized polytheism necessary to the functioning of the ancient Mediterranean city, and vice versa (see Rüpke 2020b, Urciuoli 2021a).

Erecting large-scale edifices and determining the movement of masses of people in and around them, but also more individual forms of engagement like prayer or bureaucracy, can be seen as (attempts of) answering or silencing the cacophony and fugacity of discourse with the means of architecture. In many cities, religious actors and organizations enlarged and institutionalized their practices alongside and entangled with religious architecture. This process – commonly referred to as monumentalization – considerably shaped the skyline of cities, which urban agents later appropriated as icons of that city. In these skylines, a city’s religious diversity – or its uniformity – becomes visible to both visitors and inhabitants. Monumentalization is neither an urban nor a religious invention yet closely interconnected by the ritual articulation of many and one of the most important steps in the monumental efforts and investments in labor that prepare and accompany monumentality, nay, form part of the latter.[13] In this very combination, monumentality has been inscribed into concepts of urbanity. The city itself is differentiated from other settlements by an intended monumentality featuring gigantic (even if composite) walls and large-scale religious and non-religious architecture (Rüpke 2022a).

In this respect, the anthropogenization and monumentalization of water related spaces in South Asia is a significant example of the transformation of natural landscapes and of land-water margins under the pressure of urbanization. Lakes and ponds, riverbanks and wells were transformed, following the initiative of urban actors into durable large-scale structures. Such structures became essential urban landmarks, in some instances even central elements of urbanity, like the funerary *ghāṭ*-s of Benares, the gigantic and richly carved stepwell of Rāṇkī near Patan (Gujarat) or the Gaṅgorī *ghāṭ* of the Udaipur lake. While the imaginaries and ideas linked to water are not specific to the city, the monumentalization of water places ensues from the urban context. It illustrates an accumulation of resources and capital, as well as the access to specialized skills and knowledge (Keller forthcoming-d, Keller forthcoming-e). Moreover, the formation of such sophisticated spaces doubles through a codification of rituals and the use of space: not just gestures and rituals themselves are regulated but they are attributed specific timings and spaces (definition of festival timing, codification of prayers, specialization of religious agents, etc.). In the framework of urbanization, the monumentalization of religiously charged spaces such as water spaces in South Asia not only increased their visibility, it also enabled the controlling of spaces, imaginaries, values and behaviors.

Cities are visible from afar – their oversized edifices – when compared rural equivalents – visually extending beyond the immediate city boundaries. As originally European monumental structures, churches and cathedrals have shaped the “zoomed out” image of their home cities while at the same time being salient features of the spatial ordering of everyday life and death in their neighborhood. Therefore, a significant change to the obvious connections between urban topographies and religion occurred when the placement of the dead resulted in new locations. During the Roman period, by law, burials had to be placed outside of the city walls. However, growing cities, for instance Rome, had to deal with the enlargement of the urban territory that subsequently and unwillingly led to a co-spatiality of the living and the deceased (Lätzer-Lasar 2023). The resource space had to be negotiated repeatedly under the changing circumstances. A

[13] (Osborne 2014, Torras Freixa 2018, Buccellati 2019, Hageneuer and Heyden 2019)

tension arose between the customary practice of visiting the dead regularly and the inconvenience of a long drive or walk to a grave out of town. This may have been one of several aspects that led to the construction of underground catacombs and their extensive use from the 1st century to the Middle Ages and even beyond (Lätzer-Lasar 2022b).[14]

For much of the Middle Ages and into the early modern period, the dead were buried in churchyards, directly surrounding a place of worship, which was at the center of urban life (Brademann 2013). In this way, anyone passing through the town or entering the church would see epitaphs, tombstones and other memorials. While burials without markers or simple wooden crosses were common, at least the epitaphs and tombstones of high-ranking clerics or officials contained religious elements, which also reminded passers-by of their own mortality, expressed in turns of phrase like *hodie mihi cras tibi* or the Dance of Death (*Totentanz*, *Danse Macabre*) iconographies. In the early modern period, clerical actors resisted changes to urban burial architecture and the placement of cemeteries beyond the vicinity of the churches (Sörries 2009, Fischer and Herzog 2018). This was the case in Nuremberg, where extra-mural plague cemeteries were established in the early sixteenth century. Such extra-mural burial spaces were normally under control of the city and while religious actors continued to be important; their administration was carried out by urban actors. They were moved for a range of reasons, including concerns about hygiene and the spread of diseases, but most of the movements depended on local circumstances and initiatives by individual urban dignitaries (Christ and Gutiérrez 2022). The movement of the dead meant that the topography of the town as a whole changed, while burial sites were previously in the center of town, they moved to the outskirts and peripheries. Such processes can be detected in Munich, Vienna, Hamburg and other urban centers. In many cases, urban magistrates established either one main cemetery for the whole town, or a range of different ones, normally covering different areas. In London, this latter option led to the establishment of the so-called Magnificent Seven cemeteries in the 19th century. However, even when cemeteries were moved in the course of the early modern period, the dead remained important and epitaphs and tombstones could remain in the town centers. Most importantly, many rulers continued to be buried in crypts and burial spaces right in central areas, for example in Westminster in London or in St. Michael’s Church, Munich.

## 2.5 Changes in discourses on urbanity

*How do religious-ethical evaluations affect contact density and deal with the issue of the management of information? How do this, in turn, affect the styles of interaction and communication within the city? More generally, how are urbanity and discourse on urbanity impacted by the close proximity of religious traditions and the visibility of religious identities? What is of the urban that*

[14] A somewhat different situation presents itself in Athens in terms of the placement of the dead within and outside the city. For example, catacombs (*columbaria*) seem not to have existed in ancient Athens - from the outgoing fourth century and especially in the fifth and sixth century graves were also situated within the city wall in abandoned buildings. Cfr. on *columbaria*: (Flämig 2007), 28-36 with 28 s. note 267 in particular, and (Tzavella 2088) for Late Antique tombs. The situation in Athens is also subject of a forthcoming paper by Marlis Arnhold).

*provokes religiously motivated anxieties about and/or condemnations of urban life and how are these concerns and oppositions promoted and institutionalized within the urban space?*

Urbanity, as referred to here in order to understand urban and religious change, is not just the sum or consequence of topographical facts or architectural arrangements. We propose to give changes in the discursive construction of urbanity, of reflecting upon and speaking about living in such proximity a prominent place in the research on the reciprocal formation of religion and urbanity. Religious-ethical evaluations can affect the understanding and the management of urban contact density in several aspects, including a most critical one: the employment of techniques and the development of attitudes for monitoring the access to personal information (Simmel 1950 (1908)). Cities do not only need to temper concentration with sparseness. They are also places where people successfully engage in distance-enhancing performances while perceiving them as necessary and meaningful. Inhabitants interested in regulating their reciprocal knowledge have to cooperate with others: discretion and "civil inattention" (Goffmann 1963a) on the one hand, "covering" and "passing" (Goffmann 1963b) on the other, are *urban and urbane* tactics to keep others at bay and to lie low.

Religious guides to urbanity, that is religious attempts of ordering urban co-existence, aimed at providing safe passage through urban life.[15] As valuable sources for investigating discourses of urbanity, these guides are of interest for three specific reasons. First, studying the guides allows one to approach the motivations fueling urban lifestyles and negotiations of peaceful co-existence. Secondly, they constitute valuable sources of the spatial and temporal configurations of power from which they emerge (such as empires, as well as processes of secularization). Lastly, and most importantly, they reflect imaginations of urban utopia and of ideal cities.

Religious movements are particularly sensitive to information management when dislike towards them is widespread. Early Christian texts are constantly trying to dismiss slander; they challenge malignant gossip and debunk fake news about Christ's followers. At the same time, these texts aim to provide different publics with 'correct' insider knowledge of the doctrine, the cult, and the activities in the assemblies. In doing so, they are interested in raising curiosity and cultivating the alleged mystery of a religion that strives to remain inconspicuous to a certain form of city-wide public.

The question about how to navigate the blurry line between reciprocal knowledge and ignorance, secrecy and publicity, suspicion and trust stands at the center of an anonymous writing titled *To Diognetus*. Directed toward a non-Christian gentleman, the text describes and advertises a quiet set of contemporary Christians. They are people who navigate the daily routine of urban relationships by keeping a low religious profile without dissimulating. They admire but do not seek martyrdom. In short, they go about their lives without trumpeting their religious predilection and alerting others to their Christian-ness (Boin 2015, Urciuoli 2021b, Urciuoli 2021a). Yet, so the author, persecutions do happen because non-Christians do not really know the Christians (*Diogn.* 5:12). What they wrongly believe to know about them depends on misinformation about

[15] Religious guides to urbanity in their different literary forms and communicative purposes have been studied in the context of the research group "Religion and Urbanity" for Augustan Rome (Rüpke 2021a), early Christ believers (Urciuoli 2021b), Bologna (Filocamo forthcoming), early modern Baltic towns (Christ forthcoming), 16th- 19th century Tunis (Lafi 2022), present-day Mumbai (Contractor 2021) as well as early 20th century New York (Thissen forthcoming).

everything Christians do offstage, away from the public eye. Inconspicuous lives have always generated gossip. All kinds of people, urban and not, fabricate, circulate, and give credence to rumors and slander. Moreover, the secondary importance of the actual content of the gossip in its relation to the ‘truth’ with respect to the gossip´s promise/capacity to recalibrate power relations (Scott 1990) applies to both rural and urban communicative channels. In cities, however, both the number of humans communicating within a web of gossip and the speed of their diffusion due to the density of contacts is disproportionately higher. Increased by the lack of divulgence, the unruly circulation of disparaging reports threatened the reputation of the Christians secret knowledge and its practitioners.

As *To Diognetus* shows, the written discourse of urban Early Christ believers reflects their perceived need to manage information and contact. At the same time, their modes of management afforded them the possibility of enhancing the appeal of, and initiation to, their belief by associations with secrecy and differentiation. From the study of early Christ religion as an urban religion, the city appears as a socio-spatial form enabling religious practice, belief and communion while simultaneously demanding a range of strategies on the continuum from circumspection to secrecy because of the possibility of negative physical and discursive fallouts.

Comparable dynamics are observable in the study of present-day discourse on (the visibility of) religious identity in the Mumbai slum of Dharavi. The poorer, subaltern sections of a city’s population often share specific discourses on life in the city, including an affiliation of religious pluralism. In present-day Mumbai, Dharavi residents do have a largely positive attitude towards the city as source of livelihood. Its Dalit inhabitants see Mumbai also as a place providing the space for new interactions in which caste affiliations remain invisible. Especially in Dharavi, Dalits often successfully manage to chastise any casteist behavior.

The sense for religious plurality is further strengthened among many (not all) Hindu residents of Dharavi by the close coexistence of the wide range of Hindu and non-Hindu religious strands within the slum which allows individuals to engage with other religious traditions than previously known. This is less the case among followers of Abrahamic religions. At the same time, once broader (national or regional) forces successfully mobilize and exploit ethno-religious difference, hostilities can lead to violent clashes, as happened during the 1992/93 anti-Muslim pogroms when parts of Dharavi were some of the national hotspots. The anti-Tamilian riots instigated by the Shiv Sena with their (then) ‘son-of-the-soil’ agenda are another example in point.

The first part has shown the fruitfulness of investigating the interplay of various believers in urban settings, their negotiations of secrecy/visibility and horizons of hope/expectation. The analysis of the discursive strategies of actors around religious and (newly designated) secular spaces is equally profitable for the inquiry into criticism of urban lifestyles, often from within the city, and the employment of religious discourse in this, like asceticism or exodus.

The staging of theatre developed out of religious spaces in classical Hellenic cities (e.g. staged songs linked to the cult of Dionysus) while maintaining overtones of urban refinement. Theatrical enactment with its opportunity to foster self-identification with the plays' subject matter continued to be a central religious medium, for example in 16th and 17th century Jesuit schools. The adaptation of this medium in larger early modern European cities led to the establishment of communal houses for theatre plays, operas and concerts, changing both the cityscape and the public discourse about the city. Performances were reported on in the press and other

publications far beyond the city limits; many travelers also reported on visits to these venues in their travelogues. The institutionalization of (secular) culture as well as the discourse about it can certainly be interpreted as a sign of urbanity. Today, these cities would be called cultural metropolises.

In contrast to today's 'theatre criticism', the specifically early modern discourse on theatres and performance houses often included an elemental critique of the institution on the part of certain religious groups. In Hamburg, for example, the representatives of Pietism fundamentally questioned the *Oper am Gänsemarkt* – probably the most important theatre in the German-speaking world around 1700 – as a place of moral decay. While Lutherans classified opera and theatre as adiaphora, the Pietists[16] referred to the theatre in its entirety as *opera diabolica*, the work of the devil or darkness (Rekatzky 2014, Rekatzky 2019). This shaped many a confrontation between church and theatre in early modern European cities. From around 1630 to 1730, Lyon – a metropolis with theatre halls (since the 16th century), an opera house (1687) and a concert hall (1728) (Rau 2014) – had a *Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement* that considered it its task to turn the citizens into Catholic subjects. In this context, they tried to prevent actors from entering the city's stages or, failing that, at least to prevent them from playing morally offensive material. The *Compagnie* counted it among her 'good works' to oppose farces, operas, plays and jugglers and anything else that was – in their perspective – against good Christian manners in the city (Rau 2014).

Concern for pollution and purification, frequently expressed in metaphorical speech of "decay", "darkness" and "moral contagion", was and is by no means an urban preoccupation. However, many commentators in Early Modern Europe who were invested in the proper religious – and thus ethical and political – order of life threw at least one skeptical eye on the goings about town. Exchange, (possibilities of) anonymity and co-existence in otherness/difference – all constituent elements of any city's urbanity – were seen as nutrients of moral 'deviance', 'seduction' and 'debauchery'. The power of cities of temptation and transgression were voiced, for example, in French, English and Scottish polemics on "libertine" comings and goings in and out towns from the 16th century onwards. Misgivings over pollution in the sense of depreciated natural resources – reduced quality of water and air, or the effects of inadequate housing conditions – hinged on the fundamental transformations of the socio-economic composition of and lifestyles in cities brought on by specific urbanizations in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. Narrative and administrative texts on these aspects featured prominently in debates on social policy, poverty and increasingly hygiene, especially among clerics and religiously motivated social reformers.

As such, concern over pollution brought on in cities – or rather, how to remain 'pure' within urban multitude it was by no means limited to inhabitants of European cities over time. Discourses on pollution/purification and concomitantly on the evaluation of urban social structures can equally be substantiated in the case of early modern India.

In South Asia, water represents a primary agent of differentiation. Dharmic narratives make water a crucial element of the purification process necessary to achieve enlightenment and to exit reincarnation cycles. Thus, water is an essential companion on the spiritual journey and an inevitable element in or near religious sites. Apart from mountain sites, shrines and temples generally develop on water sources (Meister 2005, Keller forthcoming-c, Keller forthcoming-b).

[16] Pietism is a movement within Lutheranism with an emphasis on living a vigorous Christian life.

The Brahmanic tradition in particular made purity distinction the corner stone of its religious system, leading to an unparalleled purification obsession. The strict demarcation of the pure and the impure, transposed in the social context, leads to rigorous categorizations of spaces and people (Keller forthcoming-b). The urban, characterized by diversity and density, reflects on the great concern of avoiding the impure polluting pure. Waters are differentiated according to their source, storing conditions, environment etc. and water spaces are ranked and arranged from the purest spots to the most polluted ones. Topography and hydraulic flow system are determinant for the organization of the urban space and the repartition of activities (Keller urbanity marker).

While water can be an agent of purification, and thus an opportunity to recover social rights, it can also act as a disputed resource and a source of exclusion. The appropriation of preferred water sources by religio-socially privileged groups (high castes) results in low castes and outsiders being deprived of an adequate access to water (Keller forthcoming-b). Thus, in South Asia, the religious narratives on water are crucial for the organization of both urban landscape and social organization and hence an important tool for the promotion and institutionalization of urbanity.

## 2.6 City crises

*How do religious practices contribute to the emergence and intensification of crises? Are there any religious factors that might lead to the abandonment of cities in the context of military or ecological disasters? Do religious resilience factors or religious anti-urbanism exist?*

Historically, shrinking and even the end of cities is as frequent as foundation and growth. Did religious practices, ideas, institutions play a role mirroring their relevance in the latter processes? We have tested and do suggest the employment of the concept of resilience to tackle this problem but not without some caution. Resilience has become not only a major tool for historical diagnosis but above all is “the preferred policy constellation to address futures that are extremely uncertain but that are likely to be extreme“(Brantz and Sharma 2020, 11). For a historical analysis the conflation of systemic approaches and concepts of psychology for individual actors poses severe problems, as resilient individual behavior like fleeing might lead to the collapse of urban structures or vice versa. Thus, we propose to use resilience in order to detail factors rather than hiding them in some causal black box. On the level of generalities, religion enters the historical stage in the role of enhancing religious actors’ ability to bear suffering but also in the role of admonishing to leave or devalue the urban den of iniquity. Three examples might suffice to illustrate the point.

To start with more recent experiences, in a contemporary Indian metropolitan city like Mumbai (or on a numerically smaller but not less violent scale in (Behal 2022), crises with a religious background occurred in consequence of the politicization of religion and overarching religious identities since the late 19th century. National political actors have been the main drivers. For this, the two key factors have been policies of cultural Hinduization, and the strong distancing of large parts of the urban (upper) middle classes with Hindu affiliations from lower castes/classes as well as Muslims. Perpetrators of anti-Muslim pogroms in Mumbai were often recruited from lower castes, including inhabitants of Dharavi, whose hope of gaining recognition through these deeds was often disappointed (Fuchs 2005, Fuchs 2018). In neither case, the urban settlement disappeared but was occasionally pushed to the brink of civil war and led to religiously selective flight from the city in large numbers.

For the city of Rome, we have identified religious practices and interpretation of catastrophic historical events that seem to have provided 'steeling' and increase of urban resilience. This included strategies of appropriation of a highly differentiated urban topography. It also included strategies of interpreting dire events against a backdrop of a calendar of good and bad days, in which repetition of disaster might be easily prevented by the avoidance of certain annually recurrent dates (Rüpke 2020a) Given our evidence, any causal relationships are difficult to be further ascertained. Evidently, several religious practices further attachment to place.

At the same time, strands of anti-urban religious discourse (not least in the images of Babel and Babylon) might also have prepared people to leave cities. Evidence is even weaker, however. Existing groups are driven out by persecution rather than suddenly exchanging urban for non-urban space. Our review of cases points to two very different religious drives, both addressing primarily individuals and leading to the formation rather than presupposing the existence of (religious) groups. Large-scale movements resembling pilgrimages, like the Shepherd's crusade in 13th century Flanders and France, can be instigated by millennial concerns (Mersch 2022). Individuals might be enticed to form or join monastic communities whether in the Indian subcontinent or around the Mediterranean. Paradoxically, even if employing rural or even anti-urban semantics, often typically urban lifestyle elements and techniques (writing, reading, counselling, advanced artisanship) and even institutionalization on urban scale might structure such an urbanity outside of (but often close to) traditional urban space.[17]

[17] Discussed in the framework of the international conference "Blurring Boundaries" in 2021, organized by the "Religion and Urbanity" group. For the closing comments see (Rau and Fuchs 2021) and the Virtual Collected Issue on Religion and Urbanity online: https://www.uni-erfurt.de/en/max-weber-kolleg/forschung/forschungsgruppen-und-stellen/research-groups/humanities-centre-for-advanced-studies-kolleg-forschungsgruppe-kfg-religion-and-urbanity-reciprocal-formations-for-2779/publications/virtual-collected-issues/blurring-boundaries.

# 3 Urbanity changes religion

The impact of religious institutions on the urban cultural and built up fabric – from individual beliefs and practices to highly visible activities or permanent architecture in urban space, from diffused members of religious networks to groups held together by a shared identity framed in religious terms, from wandering ascetics and preachers to highly codified organizations and professionals – in short: how religion changes urbanity, has been the topic of research in chronological and geographical 'pockets' of many disciplines that we have started to bring together and further develop, as outlined above. Religious change, instead, has typically been portrayed as the result of founding figures, dogmatic innovation or slowly changing mentalities as independent and – if at all – organizational features ('church history') and material expressions of such beliefs ('art history') as dependent variables. Before global cities and migration, religion was hardly treated as being impacted by space in general and urbanity in particular (for an exploratory treatment see (Rau and Schwerhoff 2008, Stump 2008, Knott 2010). Thus, our results presented in this second section are much more tentative and explorative than those summarized in the first section. The questions organizing these results deal with urban socio-spatial realms shaping religion in terms of spaces, practices, media of communication and discourses. They address

- the spatialization of religion in cities under condition of segmentation or religious plurality from different scales (household context, neighborhoods and the city as a whole),
- the introduction of specific religious architectures, practices and techniques are examined on the ground of specific urban circumstances,
- the increasing visibility of religion in cities as observed in both its material and discursive dimensions and explored vis-à-vis processes of sophistication and legitimation, competitions and production of new media of communication.

The urban take on the discursive dimension of religion is further explored

- through the effects of adopting writing, as urban technique, and its effect on the elaboration of new forms of religious communication, practices, and display. Following this, we focus on the urban and social factors boosting
- the rise and internal structuring of religious groups and organizations as well as
- the re-elaboration of religious *imaginaires* and aspirations.
- Finally, we cover the replacement of the religious and/or secularization processes.

## 3.1 Spatialization and growing complexity of religion

*Is there a differentiation between central and peripheral cult sites? Is there a spatial differentiation of the divine into individual deities or gods/ancestors in sanctuaries and cemeteries? Do social and religious milieus develop in specific city quarters with resulting conflicts or overlaps? Are they ritually or discursively re-integrated and hierarchized?*

By "spatialization" of religion we mean processes in which religious actors or practices are also spatially represented or embedded, for example by giving them a structural, architectural form or by localizing them, i.e. by occupying a fixed place. In the urban context, this also refers to the spatial relations (relationship of closeness and distance, spatial hierarchies, visibility, etc.) to other social phenomena. Architecturally, mosques are the clearest sign of the presence of Islam in

a city. More by tradition than building regulations, the idea has developed that a mosque must always face Mecca. This orientation was not entirely insignificant for everyday religious practices: it was indicated by so-called *qibla* walls, which were used as a guide for praying, animal sacrifices and for taking care of bodily needs. Carmen González, however, in her study of mosques in Al-Andalus in the Middle Ages, has found that, as the Great Mosque of Córdoba, the secondary mosques of the city were also not accurately aligned towards Mecca (González Gutiérrez 2016, González Gutiérrez 2018). Similar findings were made earlier by Jiménez (Jiménez 1991) and Rius (Rius 2000), who found that almost all mosques in Al-Andalus identified today were poorly oriented in relation to the sacred city, or by Bonine (Bonine 1990), who obtained similar results after his analyses in Morocco. Here, and following King's analyses (2018-2019), one would have to ask whether 'orientation towards Mecca' in the Middle Ages was perhaps not necessarily synonymous with an exact cardinal direction, whether there would have been multiple accepted *qibla* directions and, therefore, whether the terms correct or incorrect are the most appropriate to define this parameter. Given the astronomical, mathematical, urban and even sometimes legal complications involved in the issue, it can perhaps be stated that the orientation towards Mecca was desirable, but could not always be implemented structurally and was therefore not such a strict obligation.

We also find spatial differentiation in the different types of mosques in cities such as Friday mosque, secondary mosques and private mosques. The Friday or congregational mosque was usually the largest mosque in the city, it was unique and most believers gathered there for a variety of purposes. Friday Mosques were often located in the center of a city (which does not necessarily mean the geographical center); in many Arab cities such as Sanaa, or cities in the Bilad al-Sham such as Aleppo, Palmyra or Jerahs, in close proximity to the Bazaar or trade areas (Mermier 1997, Genequand 2012, Guidetti 2016).

The segmentation, routinization, and perhaps professionalization of the urban multiplication of temples, groups, or parishes is severely understudied and needs further investigation. Interaction with religious or political hierarchies frequently led to the prioritization of one of such units, often due to historical contingencies and massively stabilized and justified in architectural terms, size, lavishness, and even frequency of rituals, but also for economic interests. Such 'Friday mosques' or 'cathedrals' have often monopolized or at least disproportionally attracted research interest and led to neglect of the local, but also wider inner-urban function and functional adaptions of the less privileged units, as could be shown for Almohad Cordoba (González Gutiérrez and R Clapés forthcoming).

Breaking down 'the divine' or the transcendent superior 'powers' into addressable entities seems to be a major challenge for human-divine religious communication, and is even more so if these addressees are to be matters of further inter-human communication or are subjects to attempts to long-term stabilize them in names, images, owners of temples, and forms of intellectual systematization (Rüpke 2021a). In cities, religious knowledge might have been an important new field of elite distinction (Smith 2020). Even on a basic level, problems of addressing are an often disputed matter and a primary arena for religious competence and competition, whether it is about the 'correct' name, the suitable god, participation in stabilized practices ('cults') or imagined belonging to, or membership in religiously defined groups ('religions'). Spatial differentiation seems to be paramount (Bonnet 2017) and driven by different factors of urbanization. A stable spatial differentiation is advanced by the architectural permanence of different 'temples', from the

fourth/third millennium BCE Mesopotamia, Uruk's Anu and Eanna temples, onwards (Liverani 2006, Rüpke 2022b, Rüpke 2022a), as a result of a 'spatial fix' also in the field of religious strategies (Urciuoli 2020b).

For ancient Rome we have demonstrated that such a process is being advanced by the media of material images, writing, and the communicative institutions of 'disciplines' *(artes)* and literary genres (Rüpke 2022b). The spatial focus of our analysis has shown how the diverse associations and affordances of different locations, the different agents involved there and their competing strategies could easily develop substantial differences in social and ritual practices, even if nominally interacting with and placing the same deity. The Mater Magna sanctuaries on the Palatine and on the Vatican hill display very different types of architectural and spatial arrangements for rituals, they attracted very different objects for ritual use or dedication and triggered very different inscriptions with regard to the wording, occasions and self-descriptions of dedicands. The individual iniating (but over large periods repeatable) rite of the *taurobolium* (a specific bull sacrifice) was offered on the Vatican, as the find of multiple dedicatory altars informs us. However, this was apparently not offered on the Palatine, where rather associations of the cult with local urban history and myths were stressed and dramatic performances (theatre plays) for large audiences were given (Hofmann and Lätzer-Lasar 2021).

The phenomenon is neither restricted to nor typically leading into processes of differentiation of 'gods' or groups. The contextual analysis of built environment and intra-site study of the spatial distribution of religious artefacts within the southwestern neighborhood's residential units of the 3rd century CE city of Barikot suggests the presence of a multi-dimensional household religiosity with compartmentalized forms of religious communication (Iori forthcoming). The open courtyard with a closed shrine containing a stupa model was the core of both social and religious life of elite households, arguably with a focus on regulating and consolidating (inter-)household relations. Small stele statues permanently on display within niches placed either in the corridor used as kitchen or small rooms seemed to have functioned as protectors or guardians requiring ephemeral offerings (such as oil-lamps, garlands, incense) and probably daily prayers.

The flexibility in the location and selection of the deities to display probably depended on religious background and affiliation or taste. Rather than the Buddha, urban actors seemed to have perceived Bodhisattvas and local deities as more ideal quotidian guides, thus pointing to a diverging religious dimension. On the level of household, religious practice is associated to non-Buddhist female terracotta figurines, a large-scale artefact associated to traditional commoner beliefs and practices in the Gandharan region since proto-history. Although their function is still not clear, these movable figurines do not seem to have been used as offerings but rather as a sort of amulet or as device for rituals. Their short life cycle seemingly ended once they were (intentionally) broken. This might be connected to protection rituals of daily or routine household working activities not necessarily related to activities performed by women but more properly to activity performed within the women domain, the household. Having said this, a possible connection with the protection of childhood cannot be ruled out either.

This evidence suggests that by using different media of religious communication available in urban production, household members opened up temporary situations or settings of religious communication that are differentiated in terms of temporalities and rhythms, religious purposes and spatial practices.

The interplay of cities and religious organizations moving into or to the outskirts of cities created new spatial contexts for religious practices and thus their subjection to the local regimes and discourses of urbanities. For Western and central Europe, the moving of mendicants and the economic as well as intellectual and pastoral developments have been widely analyzed.[18] However, other religious orders and communities influenced and were influenced by the spatial and social fabric of cities as well (Oberste 2012, Lutter 2020). For instance, collegiate churches had an impact on urban space as they formed their own district separate from the rest of the city. During the late 15th century, prelates further spatially distinguished the district of the collegiate church from the city by erecting or fortifying walls and fences as well as locking doors.[19] As a result, citizens ritually or narratively re-integrated it into the civic space by means of processions or claims made in historical narratives and lawsuits.[20] These citizens constructed the separate district of the collegiate church as a threat to urbanity and tried changing the meaning ascribed to it.

Spatial differentiation of the religious in early modern European cities is most readily apparent in the bi-confessional or pluri-religious cities (Blum 2015, Riotte 2017). However, in these central and western European urban traditions religious competition hardly (or rarely) results in a clear religious division of urban neighborhoods. The more frequent case is that of mixed living conditions, where authorities regulated access to places of worship in particular: from sole use by one denomination to dual use with temporal or spatial regulation (‘church simultaneum’). With regard to religious developments, despite aggressive rhetoric and even full-scale, sometimes genocidal violence, the co-spatiality of practices lowered the threshold for participation across group-boundaries and triggered subtle reflections about the exact characters of differences (schism, heresy) and the accompanying social and organizational processes (‘syncretism’, ‘confessionalization’; ‘religions’ and ‘denominations’). At the same time, an increasing range of shared material symbols or practices was subjected to processes creating ‘fine distinctions’, whether by innovation or archaization of textiles, rituals, or languages and reading practices. Again, pressure of urban density enforced reciprocal visibility and an urbanity that constantly recalled the uniting factor of shared membership and obligations.

The religious and confessional diversity in towns also meant that arrangements for the care and burial of the dead became increasingly diverse (Christ 2022a). In pluri-confessional regions, caring for the sick and dying could lead to compromise and syncretism between groups, which were normally antagonistic towards each other (Christ 2021). It was possible for burial spaces to be reserved for certain groups of people as well as for migrants or (religious) refugees to establish their own, independent burial spaces. For example, in Regensburg, a cemetery for Protestants attending the meetings there became a key feature of the urban topography.

Depending on the specific cases and times, attempts to integrate newcomers and multiple confessions were possible, but also distinct moves to enforce separation. In some cases, cemeteries were subdivided between different religious groups, with certain sections only accessible for certain confessions or religions. It was also possible that some groups were entirely excluded; normally this was the case for Jewish communities (Brademann 2013). In towns like

[18] (Elm 1981, Helbling et al. 2002, Röhrkasten 2004, Bériou and Chiffoleau 2009)
[19] Generallandesarchiv (GLA) 97, Nr. 616, 7r; Stadtarchiv (SA) Lindau A III Nr. 78/1, 2r; Stadtarchiv (SA) Ellwangen Schillersche Chronik part 3 D no. 42.
[20] GLA 97, Nr. 616, 5v; GLA 61 Nr. 10495, 27r; Staatsarchiv Augsburg (StAA) Damenstift Lindau MüB 62, 42v-43v.

Munich or Dresden, for much of the early modern period, Jews could not bury their dead within the city or even the territory and had to find other solutions to bury their dead. This frequently resulted in long journeys to regions under a different jurisdiction. When, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, extra-mural burial sites made it possible for Jews to be buried in the cities, in most cases, they retained a burial space separate, and regulated separately, from Christians (Christ 2022b).

A comparable situation can be observed for Christians in primarily Muslim or Hindu regions. Although there have been organized transports of the dead throughout history (for which insurance policies can be taken out today), this was usually limited to the upper classes or took place in the context of the organized ransoming of slaves. In the course of the early modern period, however, specifically dedicated cemeteries were increasingly built, often on the outskirts of the city or in a clearly defined area, as examples from Jeddah or Kochi show (Krieger 2013, Freitag 2022). Repeated encounters in specific locations and the voluntary or enforced usage of different ritual spaces could lead to higher density of interaction and possibly even growing cohesion within existing or emerging groups, as can be shown for contemporary Indian cities. This might be a result of urban planning agencies as in the case of Jeddah or competitive religious actors. Characteristic for aforementioned Dharavi is the multiplicity of religious milieus. Both places for the different deities and places of worship are spread across Dharavi, the majority of these being close to clusters of (caste) communities that are the main followers of a deity or a denomination. In Dharavi, the more prominent religious sites play roles of prominence only for some among the many ethnic and linguistic communities living in Dharavi – each community having its own nets of meaning and relationships, also in religious regards, while some individuals in addition make their own selections among religious denominations. Among the architecturally prominent sites, the Dhareshwar temple is of relevance largely for one caste (*Dhors*, tanners by tradition), but has lost in significance with the closure of the big tanneries (for ecological reasons). Muslims in Dharavi (mainly Sunni) have one large mosque, used especially for Friday prayers, while some Muslims use small neighborhood praying sites for everyday visits. The Ganesh temple has special importance at certain festivals beyond the community running it (*Adi Dravidas*). Catholics (in Dharavi largely *Nadars* and *Adi Dravidas*) may visit larger churches outside Dharavi on specific occasions. For followers of traditional North Indian bhakti traditions and for Buddhists (*Mahars* from Maharashtra and some *Chamars* from Uttar Pradesh), the important religious centers lie outside Mumbai at sometimes large distances.

## 3.2 Adapting religious practices to urban conditions

*How are religious rituals appropriating the complexity of urban space? How and why are they involving larger portions of the urban population? How do new rituals trigger new architecture and vice versa?*

Bringing together heterogeneous, discursive and non-discursive practices of creative adaptation of religious communication to the urban space, the newly coined concept of citification of religion can be particularly useful as framing analytical tool for this section of the article. Citification *of* religion refers to those processes whereby differently empowered agents across the social spectrum carry out religious actions that succeed in appropriating city-spaces at least for some time, in relation to a certain audience, and in a manner that engages with the urban quality of their contexts at particular moments in their histories. A scholarly evaluation and decision based on the

observation of different instances of citification, *urban religion* can be viewed as the temporal accumulation of such processes that produces, in turn, new urban spaces (Urciuoli 2020a).

The concept offers three major advantages. First, with reference to *urbanization*, it explains the transformations in human settlements towards densification and differential nucleation as the set of processes and states of affairs that make possible other processes and states of affairs concerning religion. Second, with regard to *religion*, it suggests to look at religious phenomena in cities as outcome of specific uses of, and action on, spaces by religious agents instead of seeing them as characteristics of a specific, spaceless and/or space-insensitive, religion (Urciuoli and Rüpke 2018). Third, applied to specific religions, the notion permits to observe an urban religion in the making by interpreting different phenomena either overlooked or approached without an eye to the urban, as diverse but interlaced trajectories of citification.

In the case of early Christ religion, citification has proven to be instrumental in bringing together heterogeneous aspects such as: the literary activity of constructing a Christian image of a city; a practice of recruitment based upon neighboring relationships; the role played by the city-space in the production of a new notion of the poor and the design of a new system of poverty relief; the detour of urban death spectacles into martyrdom events; the transformation of the urban "culture industry" into a tantalizing opportunity for would-be religious specialists; the construction of a self-styled religious authority by tapping into urban life's segmentation, spatial fragmentation, and the related housing and mobility patterns; the production of guidelines for a Christian way of life among biased and gossipy people in potentially hostile environments (Urciuoli 2020a).

Accounts of religious practices adapted to the urban frequently focus on mass rituals (e.g., (Baines et al. 2015). Such an approach is typically followed through in a top-down perspective foregrounding the exertion of power by city-rulers and a functional interpretation of rituals as means of social cohesion connecting the urban society in total. Instead, our concept of religion suggests a bottom-up perspective. We wish to take into account the narrative *imaginaire* of life considered specifically urban. An important imperative of many historical conceptions of urbanity was the wish to include and address the whole population or at least a very large representative group (male 'full' citizens, for instance) in joint ritual. The same holds true on levels of topographic segmentation beyond that of the domestic family and clan, in wards and different kinds of neighborhoods, for example in cities of the Indus culture, Chinese imperial, Mediterranean or East African interlacustrine cities.[21]. The combination of discourses of urban inclusion/homogeneity with mass rituals and their venues modifies urban space, however not always in a material sense. Thus, we start from ephemeral practices and movements.

The pilgrimages to the Marian miracle image at the small town of Telgte in northern Germany, setting in the early 17th century, are an example of a mass ritual whose impact is perhaps more emotional and spiritual than architectural (Freitag 1999). The processions to Telgte feature rural spaces and small towns temporarily incorporated into the imagined urban space of the larger cities of departure. From Münster, Osnabrück and Rheine/Warendorf, one procession each set out to cross the intermediate countryside to the small town of Telgte. In each instance, masses of people (a couple of thousand) condensed spatially in a comparably short moment of time (one Saturday afternoon, or one Sunday morning) and dispersed as soon as the 'prayer with feet' had

[21] (Steinhardt 1999, Smith 2003, Coquery-Vidrovitch 2005, Besse 2018, Maier and Urciuoli 2020)

reached its culmination, leaving no discernible trace (apart from devotional and bodily waste along the way).

In contrast, the Mater Magna processions in imperial Rome, a city of a unique order of magnitude at the time, are an instance, where the urban space in its stricter sense (i.e. within the city boundaries) features. While, literary descriptions in imperial Rome criticized the processions of the Mater Magna priests, the combined analyses of the use of public space by the Mater Magna priests, their practices and underlying aspirations, indicates that they used urban space as a stage on which political and social legitimacy as well as belonging were negotiated. The anecdote by Diodorus Siculus (fragments from 104-98 BCE) about the Phrygian priest Battacus for instance, precisely describes the instrumentalization of urban space as theatrical platform, where the emasculated Mater Magna priests, thanks to their flamboyant and ornamental look, appeared to be indifferent to gender (Siculus 1967). They performed their extraordinary appearance in order to create a specific urban atmosphere of religious awe and to deconstruct the social hierarchy, as well as to set up a heterarchical sphere, which allowed them to manage their stigma and establish power and higher authority in clearly defined religious contexts.

Roman streets were occupied by many processional events, featuring different actors, carrying different objects (Ferri 2021), and using different routes.[22] Most importantly, they allowed not only ritual action to those who were mowing but enabled a different kind of ritual participation by many spectators. These were involved by senses and emotions (Alvar Nuño et al. 2021), in general (Bull and Mitchell 2015), expecting the moving column, attentively listening, cheering, singing, and commenting. In many other cities and periods, such processions were also such fights about belonging and recognition.[23]

This might be conceptualised as part of a larger process of theatricalization, that is, conceptually and institutionally separating the roles of ritual agents and spectators (or listeners), and redefining the role of the audience into a somehow 'active' role. This allowed for varying kinds of specific architecture to develop as well as for the professionalization treated more generally below (Pauly and Stercken 2019) . The reciprocal involvement of actors on the stage and an audience observing actors as well as other spectators in the semi-circular form of the Greek theatre is a case in point (Williamson forthcoming). These observations on Western Asian and European developments invite further comparative research. Evidently, forms of theatricalization and dramatization of religious rituals can be observed in many trajectories of urbanization; shifts from ritual action to rhetoric addresses or rather the combination of both in late antique Christian liturgy as much as in early modern Protestant funerary ritual need to be contextualized in this wider framework.

Finally, yet importantly, if ritual action and spectacles for urban crowds need the allocation of sufficient space – meaning space not permanently swallowed up in mercantile installations or accommodation -, the lack of such space shapes religious actions too. As space in Dharavi, for instance, was and is highly congested, religious congregations based outside the slum only exceptionally organize events in the slum, while the local religious congregations do not venture out of the slum. Some denominations hold processions within a section of Dharavi on certain occasions, largely to make their presence felt. Installations around figures of Ganesha (in size not

[22] (Luginbühl 2015, Östenberg et al. 2015, Latham 2016, Schraven 2019)
[23] (Lily 2006, David 2012, Garbin 2012, Morton 2012, Rubin 2021)

comparable to the ones in middle class suburbs) occupy public space during the Ganesh Chaturthi holiday (Fuchs, field notes). In many cities, and certainly beyond the "global South", we can observe the performance of ritual practices and specifically urban architecture from urban megachurches – often located outside cites for reasons of (parking) space – to small and makeshift installations on street corners, backyards or new shopping malls (Han 2015, Goh and van der Veer 2016).

A striking example for other new practices in developing urban centers can be observed in the pre-modern Swat valley. The Buddhist temples that developed in Gandharan cities (NW Pakistan) around the mid-third century CE are without parallel in earlier and coeval Buddhist complexes located in the countryside. The temples are the original product of the distinctive urban fabric of late-Kushan cities. The architectural layout of the earlier residential units on which the temples were constructed clearly shaped their spatial organization. However, shared targeted architectural interventions like the creation of roofed open platforms, the addition of a rough altar and a shallow water tanks, together with transformations in access arrangement, speak of an architectural configuration aiming at accommodating new forms of religious practices developed in the city space at (at least) sub-regional level. This is suggested by the discovery of this type of temple in cities of both the highlands (Barikot) and southern plain (Shaikhan-dheri) of the Gandharan region.

The double focus of devotion within the Buddhist temple suggests the co-presence of religious practices relying on different media of communication, varying performative experiences as well as a different way to address audience. On the raised platform, the object of devotion was temporary or permanently exposed and religious experts presumably preached here. In the open courtyard small shrines or stelae of Buddha or other Buddhist 'deities' where located. Moreover, the spatial organization and archaeological traces of ritual practices in the open court of the urban temple, where devotees could gather for performing collective ritual and making offerings to shrine and image, suggest a substantial similarity to those practices performed, in a smaller scale, at household level, in courtyards and corridors as mentioned above.

Although the dynamics that allowed to 'make space' for Buddhist temples within the urban layout may vary from city to city (e.g. change of ownership, demographic drop, etc.) it is evident that there was a moment when the specific socio-spatial setting of the Gandharan cities required new and permanent forms of religious communication. That also implied the formation of urban religious experts who managed urban temple activities, offerings and supplies within the cities, in contrast with the general trend that sees Buddhist monks living in monasteries outside the city and periodically moving into the city for performing urban services (Iori forthcoming).

An important invention in the citification of religion beyond scaling rituals in numbers of participants and the modes to lavishly distribute sacrificial meat (Rüpke 2018b, Strootman and Williamson 2020) or provision relates to the complexity and opacity of urban space: the prominence and subsequent technical and ritual elaboration of sound signals and music, whether on the move (Fless and Moede 2007) or in fixed installations (for the ogan see Eberlein 2011, Göttert 2017).[24]

[24] A comparable case of adaptation to new/incoming technologies can be made in relation to the rise of American cinemas and film production and the performance of Jewish holidays at New York. The integration of cinema

### 3.3 Increasing materiality and visibility of religion

*How do religious agents cope with the complexity and opacity of the urban space? How do such developments towards increased visibility impact on religious groups?*

Recent research has focused on the increasing materiality and visibility of religion. When thinking about practices specific to urban space – and how people modify these – we again need to focus on the excluding and including effects of urban practices. Religious practices in cities are not necessarily adapted to serve a growing audience or to produce higher visibility. Many cater to the spiritual needs of believers or serve as fields of distinction. With a view to spiritual needs, practices of divination or cursing might be consciously hidden from external sight – and vice versa frequently subject to suspicion and even persecution. Regarding social distinction, high visibility might go along with excluding groups or individuals from active participation and appropriation, for example noisy processions of believers (Garbin 2012) or the heterarchical display of religious status on tombstones.

Against this background, our interest is to bring together the material and discursive dimension of this phenomenon by looking at how scaling up materiality and augmenting visibility, and as we have just seen audibility, go along with stories and claims. Due to the intensive flows of people and goods and to the scarce space, but also due to the many co-existing and sometimes overlapping inter-personal networks, religious actors can easily opt for invisibility and ephemerality of their practices (Kippenberg and Stroumsa 1995). At the same time, religious actors too have taken up practices of display and medialization. For the ancient Mediterranean, the evidence of inscriptions, inscribed amulets and curse tablets (Faraone and Gordon 2019, Gordon 2019), but also of statuary and permanent, often stone architecture points to a raised interest in and production of ‘material’ and ‘iconic religion’ (Knott et al. 2016, Rüpke 2020a). Roman authors dated the introduction of iconic worship to an advanced urban phase (on Varro Rüpke 2014). For Barikot and its hinterland in Northeast Pakistan of the first centuries CE, such a process can be reconstructed in many details, as we have just hinted at (in addition, (Iori forthcoming)).

Complex and even monumentalized religious landscapes are not unknown to pre-urban societies as late Neolithic societies in different parts of the world attest (Andersson and Artursson 2020, Sanches and Vale 2020). It is, however, the dense and unforeseeable interaction of the urban social and material that foregrounds the importance of material symbols of religious actions and beliefs (Watson 2005, Williamson 2021). Several of our studies have reconstructed this interaction of urban and religious practices in detail.

South Asian anthropogenized hydro-spaces are often associated with oral sets of data, transmitted in the form of folk tales, poems and theatre plays. The foundation of the prestigious Sahasraliṅga lake at Aṇhilwāḍ Pātaṇ, the capital of the Solankis or *Caulukya*-s – (c. 940 - c. 1244) in Western India for instance is narrated in the story of ‘Jasma Odan’ lately performed as a popular theatre play (or *Bhavai*). The association of materiality and oral knowledge make hydro-spaces essential

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visits to the festive routine has demonstrated the far-reaching consequences for the self-reflection, historicization, and modification of ritual traditions (Thissen forthcoming).

cultural landmarks. They also bind local communities around a common imaginary world and represent essential urban narratives (Keller forthcoming-e).

Moreover, this interplay of material and non-material acts as a legitimizing tool that demonstrates the power of the donor and portrays her/him as a life provider and a community leader. Ancient religious texts such as Vedic sources (*Ṛgveda* in particular) and *Purāna*-s emphasis on the spiritual merits associated with the donation (*dāna*) of temples and water structures. Therefore, water was a primary expediency of philanthropic initiatives by Hindu and Jain rulers, Brahmins and wealthy merchants (Keller forthcoming-d, Keller forthcoming-c). Epigraphical documents related to lakes, stepwells and *ghāṭ*-s attested the dynamism and emulation of this activity. In Western India, the tradition of water donations was perpetuated by Muslim rulers, as it is recorded by inscriptions in stepwells built during the Sultanate and Mughal periods (like for instance the Bai Harir stepwell in Ahmedabad, 1499). The numerous pre-modern lakes, *ghāṭ*-s, canals, *kuṇḍa*-s (tanks) and stepwells witness the high level of technicity evolved in their construction (Keller forthcoming-e). Simultaneously, Vedas and *Purāna*-s describe highly codified practices and rituals. South Asian water structures demonstrate that sophisticated hydraulic, architectural and religious knowledge were at work together. Urbanity with its labor division and high degree of specialization in theoretical and practical knowledge (see the Vastu vidya for theoretical architectural knowledge, Keller forthcoming-f) favored the development of rich hydro-spaces empowered by complex rituals (sophisticated materiality, complex ritual practices). The urban context therefore transformed and fixed impermanent environments and ephemeral practices into long-lasting landscapes and codified rituals.

Visibility might trigger conflicts. Male prelates of collegiate churches could possess fortresses built on hills in close proximity to cities they (had) ruled. This was at least temporarily the case in Ellwangen and Kempten (Grupp and Nußbaumer 2006). Abbesses often owned representative houses inside the circuit of the religious community (Jenisch et al. 2000). Even in the female community of Gandersheim, where the collegiate church had the character of a fortress on a hill, the abbess's building was not separate and thus less explicitly visible (Schmitt 1994). Visibility of the prelates' fortresses in cities occasionally triggered violent conflicts. Fortresses spatially fixed the prelates' claim to worldly and religious dominion of the city. Citizens strove to circumvent that castles changed the meaning applied to urban space (Boone 2013). For instance, in Kempten they successfully demolished the abbot's castle. Historiographical texts of Kempten remembered its destruction in length.[25] Even though it did not exist anymore, the members of the religious community tried to mark its former location as belonging to them. The castle and its former visibility was at least discursively preserved. Urban historiography challenged this construction. A historiographical text suggests that the castle had to be destroyed as the abbot behaved immorally towards the citizens (SA Kempten B 8b: 25v-26v). Thus, he neither lived up to his own religious norms nor the behavior required of the city's inhabitants. Consequently, he was not deemed suited as a worldly and religious ruler anymore. Significantly, the civic magistrates replaced the abbot's castle among other buildings with a chapel (StAA Fürststift Kempten B 310: 28v).

[25] (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (BSB) Cgm 5819, S. 138; BSB Cgm 9470, 8v; Stadtarchiv (SA) Kempten B8b, 25v-26v).

### 3.4 Adopting of writing as an urban cultural technique

*How does religious communication capitalize on written media? How does religion change and religious groups distinguish themselves from others by adopting/adapting literate practices? Which role do literacy and texts play in negotiations of status, in settling or altering hierarchies, and in acquiring control over fundamental sectors of urban life?*

We should openly restate that in many instances the development of writing systems is not the direct result of religious practices – neither in Egypt, Mesopotamia, or Crete, probably also not for the Harappan script and Chinese ideograms. Yet, in cities, religious actors quickly adopted and developed the new possibilities of prolonged or even permanent communication with the divine and the display of this (and the content of communication) to fellow humans, either at the time or later. Writing transferred to religious practices, such as consecration inscriptions/ex-votos or supplications, and it contributes to the institutionalization of religion, e.g. in the form of membership lists. Our contribution lies in the attention paid to the urban in its dimension of urban infrastructures like printing facilities and schools as much as in its dimension of an ideological urbanity ascribing and arrogating (de facto much wider diffused) literacy and wittiness. We do not just restate the entanglement of printing presses and reformation (Giesecke 1991).

Partially overlapping or replacing more common notions like 'book religion' or 'textual communities' (Stock 1983; see Heath 2019), formulas like intellectualization and textualization of religion can be taken as metonymies of urban religion.[26] In fact, the creation of literature conveying specific religious knowledge and claiming (or challenging someone else's) religious authority is a quintessentially urban, cross-cultural, and replicable achievement. Concentrating competences, infrastructures, and technologies of writing, cities operate as socio-spatial conditions of possibility for several distinctive processes. Among these are the creation of an educational establishment and a ramified system of producing, distributing, and storing books; a sizeable concentration of (relatively) high literacy, basic reading capabilities, and both long- and short-range networks of textual exchange; the contiguity of intersecting social formations based on, or potentially including, intellectual relationships (master-disciple; patron-client); the physical and social accessibility of religious group styles and settings beyond both kinship-based domestic rituals and communal ceremonies in monumental buildings.

Historically, the rise of a religious "scriptural economy" (de Certeau 1984) is neither contingent on the formation of "bookish circles" (Hezser 2017) nor coterminous with canonization as a medium of control in the domain of religion. Rather, if specialists of early Christ religion can be seen as best representatives of "intellectualizing religious experts"' in Mediterranean antiquity (Wendt 2016), it is because they managed to leverage all urban features mentioned above to generate new textual practices and appropriate some of the existing ones (Bremmer 2021). Early Christian literate experts stood out as self-conscious producers of a new literary genre (i.e., the 'gospel-as-manuscript'), writers and dispatchers of letters, re-enactors of visions, virtuosi of the textual controversy, forgers and counter-forgers, interpolators and text-brokers, compilers and collectors of holy scripts. They earned a living and, occasionally, a reputation as teachers and philosophers. Among these practices, exchanging letters via long-distance emissaries (Allen and Neil 2020) constitute a special case played out on a wider geographical scale and thus demanding

[26] (Stowers 2016, Wendt 2016, Rüpke 2018a, Rüpke 2018b, Wendt 2021)

a set of competences and resources transcending urbanity – here narrowly understood as the capacity of an agent to master space, manage distance, and produce effects at the urban level.

In late medieval and early modern, citizens adopted certain literary practices of religious communities, e.g. collegiate churches. Their hagiographical and historiographical texts could influence how citizens imagined their history. Thus, distinguishing urban from monastic historiographical texts prove difficult (Plessow 2006) (Eckhart 2016).[27] In the case of Kempten such texts originated from a conflict between the members of the collegiate church and the civic magistrates in the 15th century and conveyed the perspective of the former (Schreiner 1975). At least some of these most likely stemmed from the school of the religious community (Baumann 1899) (Laube 2002). While (lay) citizens at first did not create their own historical interpretation, this changed in the 16th century. Being able to write these texts co-depended on who controlled education in the city.[28] In the 15th century, the civic magistrates successfully managed to establish their own school independent from the religious community.[29] This institutional context helped to create the conditions for engaging with the historical view of the religious community. Citizens used the earlier (monastic) texts as templates while changing certain aspects to suit their narrative needs (SA Kempten B 8b; SA Kempten B 31). By doing so, they simultaneously challenged and perpetuated the historical view of the collegiate churches. In other cases, the entanglement of texts was less pronounced. For instance, Lindau’s collegiate church did not produce longer hagiographical or historiographical texts. Therefore, when citizens began writing their history in the 16th century they rather borrowed from other sources (Wolfart 2017).

### 3.5 Organizational development under conditions of urban density

*Where does religious group formation take place? How do processes of professionalization of religious specialist roles come about in the city? Which forms of financing allow or require cities (begging, welfare of the poor, foundations)?*

Theorizing about religion has often presupposed the existence of well-bordered religious groups, either co-extensive with a ‘culture’ or a well-articulated ‘polity’. City-state religion was thus considered to being one natural form of religions either expanded together with a city’s imperial aspirations or swallowed by another one’s. Our historiographical as well as theoretical work has criticized such assumptions (Rüpke 2019a) and prepared for a more nuanced view on the riseand formation of religious group, whether in the form of religious options or as forms of progressive articulation of boundaries (Rau 2002, Rüpke 2007, Urciuoli 2013). This allows us to integrate the wealth of research on growth, interaction, and decline of such groups in different epochs and places. Anthropological methodology allows for a close-up on such processes in our own research. Religious entrepreneurs seek to attract clients through separate interactions or in the process of establishing a stable following and securing the basis for a growing institution that is informed by conditions of urban markets, trade networks, movements out of and into the city and the redistribution or investment of the profits of urban actors (for Rome Gordon 2017, Gordon et al. 2021). We suggest that the economic landscape thus created is a relevant factor in processes that

[27] Due to a lack of English terms the text uses ‘monastic’ in a sense that included religious communities like collegiate churches leading a less regulated lifestyle than cloisters.
[28] StAA Fürststift Kempten B 310, 98v
[29] StAA Reichsstadt Kempten Urkunde Nr. 803 [25.6.1494]

often claim to be entirely driven by ideological factors, that is, religious ideas (see below). The heterarchy enabled and furthered by the tensions and diversity of urban society is quickly reflected in the rise and internal structuring of religious organizations (Urciuoli 2022). We have shown this for the relationship of market organization and religious administration in East-Central Europe’s late medieval sees (Szende 2022) or the development of religious roles in old centers of Western Europe (Rau 2022a) as much as for the diversity of priesthoods and small religious groups in ancient Rome (Rüpke 2018c, Rüpke 2022a). Religious group formation in Dharavi in many cases follows caste membership. In some cases missionary work is undertaken by representatives of some of the Christian and Islamic denominations (earlier e.g. Methodists, Salvation Army; recently branches of evangelical and Pentecostal churches). Many of the religious groups are parts of networks that extend beyond Dharavi to other parts of Mumbai, to sites in the home region, or to prominent places of worship and/or denominational centers elsewhere in the country, some of these ‘traditional’, others recently developed as new hubs, like the centers of Navayana Buddhism (Fuchs 2003).

Different from what are considered ordinary processes of specialization, developments in Dharavi went the opposite direction of generalization of religious functions: the fact of lesser direct control by high caste members (landowners) allowed Dalits to act themselves as *pujari*s (performers of temple rituals). Similarly, Navayana Buddhism largely builds on the activities of the local lay members. One Dalit community (*Adi Dravidas*) that successfully managed its temples in Dharavi, at a later stage (i.e. in the late 20th c.) could afford to hire Brahman priests for the daily rituals from highly recognized temples in Tamil Nadu, making Dalits, who kept control over the temple administration, the patrons of Brahmans.

Living together in the city as larger and often well-integrated groups allows the lower castes fund raising and collection of larger amounts of money to invest in the building of religious structures. The members of the respective local communities in most cases fund the *gurudwara*s and *viharas*. In the case of at least one temple (that for Lakshmi), the founders of the temple used the help of the regional right-wing Hindu political party, the Shiv Sena, to pressurize people of the neighborhood to contribute to funding the temple construction (late 20th c.). In the early 20th century, the Dhareshwar temple was funded nearly exclusively by one economically particularly successful resident of Dharavi (a female owner of a large tannery; Interview Fuchs in May 2020 with descendant of the temple founder in charge of the temple at that time). Churches and the large mosque probably also received outside financial support. Apart from this flipping of traditional hierarchies in a religious context, in India's history the mixing of religious groups can be observed repeatedly (although not always). One of these groups is the Mappila Muslims, once the result of marriages between Arab-Muslim seafarers who came to trade in the port cities of the Malabar coast from the Middle Ages onwards, sometimes marrying local women. Today, they make up about 25% of the population in Kerala (Ilias 2007, More 2011).

## 3.6 Changing religious *imaginaires*

*How does urban development impact on the propagation of religious iconography? How does it produce changes in originally non-urban systems of religious meaning? More generally, what role does urbanity in play in crafting religious imaginaries? How does urbanity contribute to the competing textualization of narratives, and generate distinction among them? How does urbanity feature in the way religious institutions reflect upon their own history?*

Urban development played a significant role in the fixation and extra-regional dissemination of religious imaginaries derived from rural Vedic and non-Vedic context. In Brahmanism, Hinduism and other the religious movements stemming from Vedism, waterscapes are charged with an abundance of narratives, imaginaries and popular stories (Coomaraswamy 1971, Kumar 1983, Joshi forthcoming, Keller forthcoming-c). In the spiritual, cultural and religious context of early South Asia, water spaces are connected both with narratives of fertility, wealth and purity, but also with concerns over dangerous and untamable forces of nature. Water worlds are perceived ambiguously as essential and nourishing, due to the fertility potential of rivers and lakes, but also as destructive due to the devastating power of monsoon rains and tsunamis. Thus, the worship of water spirits such as *yakṣa*-s (female spirits of rain and water), *nāga*-s (snake-like entities) and *apsarā*-s (nature-spirits connected with water, fertility, trees, and wilderness) are some of the oldest religious practices in South Asia. They appear in epics and folk tales, as well as references in religious canons and in the classical Sanskrit literature (Coomaraswamy 1971, Kumar 1983).

Urban development involved the anthropogenization of water space and water-land margins (Keller Forthcoming Urbanity marker) and the monumentalization of water related structures such as *ghāṭ*-s, *kuṇḍa*-s (tanks), reservoirs and stepwells (Keller forthcoming-c). Water structures thus soon became and long remained one of the major expressions of urbanity in South Asia. This architectural shaping (*mise en architecture*) coincident with the fixation of water related imaginaries in the form of painted and sculpted ornamental programs: The walls of stepwells and the shrines of ritual lakes and *kuṇḍa*-s (Keller forthcoming-e) fixed imageries and narratives, thus setting a classical decorum of urban *ghāṭ*-s, tanks or wells. The gargoyle of Nepalese, *hiti*-s, or urban water tanks, for instance were usually shaped as Makara, the mythical sea-animal or crocodile (Joshi forthcoming), while dancing *apsarā*-s are a common motive of lakes and stepwells shrines. Though architecture and the circulation of building communities, city networks supported the propagation of religious iconography.

In the Vedic imaginary, the ultimate spiritual place is portrayed as an idealised *araṇya* or nature pacified by religious practices, as in the popular tale of Śakuntalā narrated in the Mahābhārata (Keller forthcoming-a). The dense settlement, in contrary, is often represented as a place of sins and erring spiritual ways (Samuel and Satapahty 2008). Yet the development of religious institutions within cities, as well as the urbanization of important religious and pilgrimage places – such as the shaivite oceanic *tīrtha* of Somnath, the Jain sacred hill of Shatrunjaya, the Srirangam temple city or the Ganga river banks at Rishikesh and Varanasi – tend to attract worshipers and pilgrims from both the city’s urban network and from rural areas (Dutta 2021). The capacity of the urban in providing sophisticated religious infrastructures as well as the service of specialized religious practitioners reverses the meanings, making the city a religious goal. In this process, spiritual imaginaries become associated with urbanity and its sophisticated context. The *ghāṭ*-s along holy rivers like the Ganga, the Yamuna or the Narmada are iconic examples of urbanized religious spaces (Keller forthcoming-e) (Keller 2022).

The oppressive presence of cities have induced religious traditions to take a strong normative stance on urbanity in their own religious imaginaries. The importance of urbanity and the explicit reflection on urbanity in shaping religious imaginaries is evident from two fortunate Jewish narratives appearing, respectively, very early in the Tanakh and the end of the Christian canon of Scriptures.

Occupying less than ten lines of the book of *Genesis*, the story of Babel famously views urbanity as a materialized evidence of human hubris. In doing so, it also indirectly engages with potentially cross-temporal and –cultural critical issues of city making and urban sociability such as: the importance of coming together on an ecologically favorable site as well as of nucleated settlements in the (long reversible) shift from nomadic life to stable habitation; language-induced reciprocal understanding as a tool for affective interactions and cooperative creations; the selection of construction materials and the inclusive/exclusive character of the decision-making processes; the production of a trans-generationally stable collective identity by settling down permanently; the fragility and replicability of urbanism. In consequence of these condensed insights, the most famous anti-urban myth in Western biblical tradition – itself paralleled in other textual traditions (Frenz 1969) initiated an intensively researched history of reception that can still offer surprising insights with regard to contemporary questions of urban sustainability and the right to the city (Lévy 2021a).

Closing the Christian biblical canon, the book of *Revelation* merges anti-urban instances and urban dreams by showing how variable the discursive normativity of urbanity can be (Nicklas and Walt 2021). Seven different urban Christ groups are alternatively warned, praised, chastized, or cursed at the beginning of the book. (Bad) religion is the problem here, while urbanity as a way of life features mainly in (negative) association with the imperial cult and idolatry in general. The book of *Revelation* ends with the establishment of powerful, true religion – at which point the city strikes back in full apocalyptic splendor. This ending with the triumphant image of a paradise city makes clear that John the Seer is not a hater of cities. His target is not the city as such. Besides the urban metonymies and allegories of good and evil, *the urban* is at stake here as a scale of regionalization (Werlen 2022) where different dimensions of social practices (i.e., commercial exchange, legitimation, communication) are produced in connection with other scales and forms of geography-making (e.g., the imperial). *Revelation* suggests that, in order to evaluate how pro-urban and anti-urban sentiments, city utopias and dystopias affect a writer´s religious imaginary, and vice versa, such dimensions must be unpacked and analyzed within the wider geographical fabric of a text.

For the rivalling gospels defining the origins of a new group of Christ-followers, the importance (gospel of Luke) or problematic character (gospel of Matthew) of cities was one of the fields of literary and ideological competition. These texts allow a view into the interweaving of religious and urban discourses, that is, the connection of the question of life with and under the divine with the question of urbanity, of the *differentia specifica of* life that can be qualified as urban. It is precisely the comparative view of the texts that allows us to get beyond the fruitless question of the "originally" urban or rural character of the movements understood as precursors of "Christianity". Instead, the question here is about the role that is ascribed to urbanity for one's own religious practice and history: an urbanity, therefore, that also changes the role of religion for one's own urban practice and history. Thus, we can show that the Gospels of Marcion and Luke were not exclusively intended for an urban audience. Rather, they are texts offering a story of urban content for urban and pro-urban communication. In this, Luke once again goes beyond Marcion. The narrated biography of Jesus is that of someone born in a city to an urban family and growing up in a city. The comparison with Matthew shows the range of positions that were possible within a discourse of city dwellers: Luke's urbanity contrasts with Matthew's aspiration to rurality. Influenced by Romanticism, New Testament research of the 19th (and still 20th) century has transformed these synchronic and strategic representations of urbanity/rurality into the

story of a linear development of the Jesus movement originating in rural Galilee and working its way across the biggest cities of the Roman Empire. The hypothesis of an originally rural collection of Jesus' sayings – called Q – translated the rural-to-urban paradigm into a textual sequence (Rüpke 2021b).

Across time and space, urbanity has been ambivalent in shaping religious imaginaries, influencing religious life-styles and affecting the history making of religious institutions. The highly ambivalent views of urbanity in the context of southern-German collegiate churches is notable example of this. Researchers have often stressed that religious and monastic views of urbanity could differ fundamentally (Heimer 2008, Brown and Dumolyn 2017). On the one hand, cities were constructed as a place of vice where salvation was more difficult to attain (Rexroth 1999). On the other hand, the city could become a utopian place of heavenly delights (Melville 2007). Religious lifestyle co-determined which attitude towards urbanity religious communities adopted. Old, unreformed communities, especially the more worldly collegiate churches, often developed a favorable view in the Late Middle Ages. Urban discourses heavily influenced how southwestern German collegiate churches imagined their own history. During the 15th and 16th centuries a range of texts and visual images of the origins of the communities were produced. In some cases, new works emerged, in others early medieval *vitae* were translated into German.[30] While older texts originated before the urbanization process and thus did not mention cities, these new works – occasionally even the translations – engaged with urbanity.[31] They stress that foundation saints as well as religious superiors attributed urban qualities to the respective settlements where the religious communities were located. Cities were regarded as an economic necessity for the well-being of religious communities and as enhancing the quality of religious life. In contrast, the historiography of Kempten depicted urbanity more ambivalently. A hagiographical and historiographical text criticizes abbots for having contributed to Kempten's urbanization (BSB Cgm 5819:93) However, even in the case of Kempten urbanity was not constructed as detrimental to a proper religious life but rather the worldly management of the religious community.

## 3.7 Replacement of the religious

*Where does the secularization of religious performance and rituals take place? Where are the functions of religious organisations (welfare, administration) taken over? Where do religious re-appropriations of former religious spaces (places of worship, cemeteries) take place? When does religious architecture transform in to heritage/museum?*

As we have stressed at the outset of our research, religion and the city – and in particular religion and urbanity – are not natural antagonists, not even for the phase of industrial high-speed-urbanization that made such a deep imprint on the conceptualization of both city and religion in the formative phases of the disciplines involved. Instead, and from early on, the borderline between what is conceptualized as social interaction with divinities and the divine and later

[30] BSB Cgm 5819, 9280, 9470; GLA 65 Nr. 432; Codices Sangallensis 598; Irtenkauf 1983; Württembergische Landesbibliothek Cod. hist. 2° 523.

[31] Altar piece with foundation saints, Ellwangen, St. Vitus; Relief around 1500, Bad Säckingen, minster St. Fridolin; Irtenkauf 1983: 58-60; WLB Cod. hist. 2° 523, 6r-v.

‘religion’ in some languages and its opposite, the very exclusion of these non-human agents from the range of the appropriate or even legitimate, is constantly and situationally re-negotiated. There are ‘multiple secularities’ (Burchardt and Wohlrab-Sahr 2013). This opens up the possibility and challenge of a more nuanced analysis of the spatial and urban factor in such changes, not shunning from basic observation about the positioning, frequency, and framing of the use of spaces and times. The following example demonstrates that the relationship between urbanity and religion offers a larger and more articulated view of secularities than simply pointing to isolated and exceptional cases of pre-modern secularization.

Negotiating the boundary between the religious and the non-religious is a particularly critical (and even lucrative) activity in times when the establishment of a religion in a city goes as far as to turn it into a fundamentalist one (AlSayyad and Massoumi 2011). Not only were late antique Christians (in-)famous for destroying and mutilating ‘pagan’ statues but, as a market for stolen artwork developed, they also quickly realized the importance of taming the power of the engraved demons and the benefits of selling particularly valuable statues as secularized pieces of art. In turn, the polytheists understood that a good artistic pedigree could save a statue from mutilation and thus began to chisel false attributions (e.g., Polyckleitos or Praxiteles) into their bases. Collection of religiously neutralized cult icons (or artistically prized gods) started to appear in the houses of wealthy Christians (Nixey 2017).

Replacement of the religious can literally go along with spatial re-placement. Our observations have concentrated on the movement of cemeteries from the churchyards to the outskirts of the town. The geographical movement mirrored a shift of responsibilities. Urban actors and administrators replaced clerical actors, who until then had provided crucial services for the dead. While religious rituals dominated the earlier treatment of the dead, now the city magistrates regulated the dead. Civic or non-religious rituals supplemented or changed religious ones, and the same was the case for administrative practices. While preachers and churchwardens kept lists of the dead for much of the Middle Ages and early modern period, urban actors could also take over such practices. Through regulations of burials and the treatment of the dead, magistrates and administrators hoped to counteract the spread of diseases and avoid divine punishment by misbehavior. This kind of social disciplining was linked to new understandings of urban order (Christ forthcoming). Spatially, the movement of cemeteries resulted in the availability of space around churches, in the center of town. Prime locations were thus opened up for other building projects and functions, leading to arguments about the correct administration of these spaces. In Munich, this resulted in disputes by clerical and urban officials as to who was allowed to collect income from the stalls, which were now put up around the church. However, while town officials took over or replaced some religious functions, religious actors continued to play a significant role when it came to the care for the dying, as the last rites and other rituals remained important. Regarding the change of the treatment of the dead and their placement, it would therefore be too simplistic to speak of a secularization in a strict sense. Rather, we can see a complex process of continuity and change in which some religious aspects were replaced, while others were kept.

Last but not least, urbanity and in particular normative concepts of how to live together in urban density can replace religion as is shown by the very rise and anti-religious bias of much of 20th century Urban Studies (Orsi 1999, Day and Edwards 2021a)). Yet, religion can also replace urbanity as is demonstrated by the ‘fundamentalist city’ (AlSayyad and Massoumi 2011) and the ISIS regime in Syrian and Iraqian cities, recently. Against such a background, the very employment

of the Religion and Urbanity approach has normative implications in its interest for both – and their complex relations.

## Conclusion

Research for this article has started from the heuristic grid for the study of the reciprocal formation of religion and urbanity that had been proposed in (Rau and Rüpke 2020). The application of the questions to the religious and urban changes, which we have identified in a wide range of cities across Mediterranean, European, and South Asian history, has led to numerous modifications – that often only result from the 'field studies' – and to a higher precision in the formulation of many questions. This has led to a wide range of findings on both phenomena and developments that not only demonstrate the plethora of urban ways of life and ideas of how to constitute and change cities, on the one hand, and the extreme diversity of widely circulating religious ideas and practices addressing different actors during the past five or six millennia of urban history, on the other. The analyses driven by these questions have proved the usefulness of the overarching hypothesis about the reciprocal formation of religion and urbanity which appears more frequently than research has hitherto assumed – even if the two directions (detailed in chapters two and three) do not always occur simultaneously but also successively.

The combined evidence clearly shows that this was as true for the past as it is for the present. It also demonstrates that this perspective of research can fruitfully been applied not only in a trans-epochal but also trans-cultural manner. Both comparative perspectives proved to be as risky as productive. Using 'religion' and 'urbanity' as second-order concepts made all the case studies engage in intensive reflections on concepts found in the evidence as well as widely applied in research. Concepts referring to large settlements entail and evoke different ideas about which kind of norms regarding the built-up environment and the cohabitation of many and different people would differentiate such settlements in terms of categories; *Stadt*, 'town', *ville*, *madina, nagara* or 'city' are all used in changing and variable discourses for which 'urbanity' offers a fruitful umbrella term for further identifying overlaps, differences, and historical entanglements.

The consequences of this complex historical situation are reflected in our findings. The changes presented in sections two and three are neither uniform nor parallel or uni-linear. They are all highly varying due to historical circumstances and the underlying different paths of urbanization. Religious semantics and beliefs, ritual traditions and forms and degrees of religious institutionalization, too, account for wide differences. Yet in their entire contingency, the changes share in their importance for the subsequent urban and religious history. They are highly consequential for the constitution of spaces, practices, and beliefs, whether urban or religious. They can also be construed as an invitation to rectify conventional taxonomies in urban history and sociology. Indeed, one of the critical outcomes of the research presented here are the severe limitations and insufficient adequacy of established typologies of cities and religions such as sacred and port cities, colonial or royal, garrison or residence cities, global cities and *Ackerbürger* towns, *Klein-* and *Großstädte*, capitals and cathedral cities often fruitfully invoked for other and much focused questions. The same holds true for the even more problematic and overly

generalizing if not outright ideological concepts of ‘Islamic’ and ‘Occidental’, Hindu or Protestant cities.

Against this background, the ‘reciprocal formation of religion and urbanity’ is not just some further ‘approach’ but has been developed above into a *method*: an organized and interrelated set of questions that can be addressed in a cross-cultural and cross-epochal manner towards a wide range of historical subjects. It can thus constitute a mode of procedure for the construction, collection and/or generation of new data for scholarly work on religion and the city. Academically, the method presented here is a challenge to theories, both of religion and of ‘the city’. It is also an invitation to bolster its applicability and reach by further theorizing about its own components and the contingent ways and potentially repetitive mechanisms of interaction.[32] Moreover, the initial heuristic grid has been turned, we claim, into a useful tool even beyond academic research. It can be instrumental for extra-academic, urban and urbanistic as well as religious and leading religious actors, confronted with the task of dealing with huge number of peoples under the conditions of proliferating urbanization *and* changing forms of ‘religionification’ and its contrary at the same time. In a more general way, this rather scientific undertaking is also an invitation to work together to improve the conditions of a good life in our cities together.

[32]Research results from the “Religion and Urbanity” group are published on a continuous basis via the open access platform and journal Religion and Urbanity online: https://doi.org/10.1515/urbrel.

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