Urban Heterarchies: Changing Religious Authority and Social Power in Cities

Veranstalter: Emiliano Rubens Urciuoli / Susanne Rau / Jörg Rüpke, University of Erfurt
Datum, Ort: 11.12.2019–13.12.2019, Erfurt
Bericht von: Claudia Heise, Institut für Buchwissenschaft, Friedrich-Alexander Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg

In some state societies, as Carole L. Crumley pointed out, hierarchy was a pervasive structural metaphor and a definition for order itself, resulting in an almost unconscious assumption to complex social fabrics. Yet many structures were not hierarchically organized: each had undeniable composition, constituting an orderly representation of the relations among elements. Therefore, Crumley added the term *heterarchy* to the vocabulary of power relations, arguing that forms of order existed which have the potential of being either unranked, or ranked in numerous ways.[1]

This conference of the DFG-funded Humanities Centre for Advanced Studies „Religion and Urbanity: Reciprocal Formations"(FOR 2779), introduced the concept of *heterarchy* to develop a more complex understanding of various sources of power interacting in a competition for precedence and authority within cities and interurban networks from antiquity to the present. To shed heuristic light on the occurrence of shifts in power structures influencing both the urban societal and religious life, as well as the production of stable and unstable configurations, the organizers invited a multidisciplinary group of international experts to the Protestant Monastery of St. Augustine in Erfurt to a fruitful exchange.

The conference covered up five major aspects: Firstly, it showed the interplay of religion and the urban in antiquity at the point of birthing heterarchies and hierarchies:

At the dawn of proto-urban nucleation in southern Etruria and Latium, demographic growth and radical changes in both the social-ethnic and political organization forced egalitarian communities to abandon their original, dispersed settlements on the planes. They founded the first cities on plateaus, estab-

lishing more centralized structures, sharpening boundaries, and creating public spaces through complexity, specialization, and differentiation of spheres of power and religion. By examining material culture, including the remains of burial grounds and cult places, FRANCESCA FULMINANTE (Bristol) introduced the development of societies of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages where heterarchical and hierarchical spheres were intertwined.

JÖRG RÜPKE (Erfurt) reviewed the role religion, neither only private nor entirely public, played during the urbanization wave of the late Republic. He showed its impact on integration and differentiation of everyday life in Roman cities as well as polity and governance. The concept of heterarchy, as the most common state in Roman cities, helped to comprehend the innumerable internal and external flows of dense and large clusters of people living and working together without a compelling overarching religious framework. This provided new perspectives on interurban relations, too.

EMILIANO RUBENS URCIUOLI (Erfurt) pointed out how religious practices caused major changes in ancient Mediterranean religion. By portraying Cyprian of Carthage, he demonstrated how heterarchy and intellectualization of religion met. Though intending to unify scattered groups of Christ believers doctrinally after the Decius persecution of the 3rd century AD, Cyprian's introduction of a sophisticated, ecclesiastical model for Christ religion, a textually designed „Church order", culminated in the creation of at least three, clearly separated (trans-)local networks. This was the result of the entanglement of varied dynamics of hierarchical and heterarchical interactions.

Secondly, the concept of heterarchy, as an analytical tool, helped to read the interrelations between centre and periphery:

By examining royal inscriptions, SHANA ZAIA (Vienna) shed light on the polytheistic system of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, headed by the sovereign deity Aššur and subordinate patron deities. In accordance with this

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[1] Carole L. Crumley, Heterarchy and the Analysis of Complex Societies, in: Robert M. Ehrenreich / Carole L. Crumley / Janet E. Levy (ed.), Heterarchy and the Analysis of Complex Societies, Arlington 1995, pp. 1-6.

superficial hierarchy, royal patronage, corresponding to the king's religious ideology, was granted to only a few cities and temples, including the capital Assur, home of the supreme god. Applying the concept of heterarchy helped to understand that all the other countless temples and cities of the empire, whether centralized or located in its most distant corners, showed a complex interplay in the competition for royal attention and in their interrelationships.

In the course of urban transition across the Middle Ages, episcopal sees displayed different models of the spatial arrangement of religious and civic centres. KATALIN SZENDE (Budapest) observed that an increasing number of new urban entities, such as secular and civic powers, emerged, heterarchical structures that interfered with the „old centres" due to an overlapping use of space and claiming authority. Contrary to Western Europe, however, the bishoprics in the cathedral cities of Bohemia, Poland, and Hungary managed to assert themselves within the heterarchical fabric by providing stability and continuity through institutionalization and accessibility.

Applying the concept of heterarchy to the „Hīr", a Romeo and Juliet-like tragedy from the 18th century by the Sufi poet Waris Shah, ANNE MURPHY (Vancouver) traced the emergence of the Punjabi language at the periphery of a linguistic and societal system where Braj and Persian functioned as institutionalized idioms of both central political and religious powers and the urban. Punjabi developed outside the traditional space for vernacular innovation: the court and religious institutions. The text mirrored this development by showing a construct of challenging power relations in the intersection of the urban and the rural, the local and the regional.

As an outcome of heterarchical logic, RONIE PARCIACK (Tel Aviv) considered the need of Indian Muslims to convert local Indian geographies into sacred Islamic landscapes. As they were peripheral to the original religious centres of Mecca, Medina on the Arabian Peninsula, and Karbala in contemporary Iraq, an irreconcilable geographical distance as well as an insuperable linguistic gap drove this development forward. Through a transition between the concepts of hierarchy and heterarchy, one can observe how authoritative *loci* alter their symbolic status and become part of a polyphonic fabric of new narratives on the Indian subcontinent, promoted, for instance, by visual iconographies of digital media in Indian Ajmer.

Thirdly, processions as religious practices of claiming space, authority and precedence, shed light on the interplay between heterachical and hierarchical arrangements of power:

From the 2nd century BCE on, Phrygian *galli*, priests of the Mater Magna, used their otherness, their transgressed gender state owing to autocastration, and conspicuous appearance, to create ephemeral, sacred landscapes and soundscapes within the polytheistic urban atmosphere of the city of Rome, by occupying public space and spectacularly staging their super-natural power. ASUMAN LÄTZER-LASAR (Erfurt) elaborated on the priests performing processions, setting up a heterarchical sphere, which influenced the crowd in order to gain both religious authority and social power for a limited time. On the one hand, they challenged the hegemonic masculinity of a state-given, hierarchically structured polity. On the other hand, however, they sustained its monitoring establishment.

After his election in 1103 AD, the new Coptic Patriarch, Abā Maqāra, rode towards the residence of the vizier al-Afḍal in a procession through Fatimid Cairo, a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic melting pot. BÄRBEL BEINHAUER-KÖHLER (Marburg) stressed that heterarchical powers were necessary to organize (religious) diversity in a metropolis like medieval Cairo, though based upon a clear legal and political hierarchy, the ḍimma, the sharīa's casuistic law, that demanded subordination and loyalty of non-Muslims to the ruling religious persuasion. Without specific unranked powers working in the background, namely the people from the different institutions arranging the event, the patriarch's inauguration could not have been realised.

SUSANNE RAU (Erfurt) introduced another striking example for an urban heterarchy by discussing Lyon around 1300. In this pre-modern city, political and religious authority had been negotiated between diverse and potentially conflicting power re-

sources, roughly speaking the archbishop, the king, and the consulate, but also their mutual challengers: the confraternities. By claiming fragmented public spaces through making themselves visible in the urban fabric, the *Trinitatis Confraternity* used its procession on Trinity Sunday for temporary appropriations of the city via annually changing routes through Lyon's topography, demonstrating its degree of agency to the ruling stakeholders that where constantly lacking acceptance.

Who would walk nearest to the holy sacrament in the Corpus Christi procession, one of the most important Catholic feasts, in the city of Constance? The Augustinian regular canons of Kreuzlingen or rather the Benedictines of Petershausen? By questioning normative hierarchies, SIMONE WAGNER (Erfurt) examined conflicts of precedence these two monasteries carried out in a legal dispute from the 1670s to the 1710s. Even though the unambiguous, spatial conditions of a procession dictated a clear hierarchy for taking specific positions, the dispute about a clear rank order, authority, and truth, that resulted in contradicting decisions by pope and emperor, ended without consensus.

Fourthly, the conference revealed how contesting heterarchical powers could echo on a hierarchical society. The focus here is on exclusion and integration of religious minorities in the urban space:

Around 860 AD a new image appeared within the symmetrical space of the Crucifixion scene. Artists introduced two female figures in the long tradition of contrast, heterarchically arranged, solely deviating in posture: Ecclesia and Synagoga. MIRI RUBIN (London) sketched how the visual scheme of Synagoga was debased dramatically within the following centuries, most noticeably in Paris around 1400. A parallel development could be observed in Synagoga's corresponding religion: Judaism. The new monumental Christian church's façades depicted this devaluation in stone, producing a hierarchical knowledge that was implanted constantly into a religious audience.

In the course of the sixteenth century, tens of thousands of Netherlandish refugees tried to flee persecution by settling down in cities along the Rhine River Corridor, constituting up to 50 percent of the town's inhabitants. By observing how urban societies echo the heterarchical and hierarchical challenges of this influx, JESSE SPOHNHOLZ (Pullman) investigated how the connivance of the local neighbourhoods played a critical role for integrating, tolerating, or at least ignoring followers of a different confession. The hierarchical framework of the cities was oscillating, too, owing to various interpretations of the Peace of Augsburg and the hierarchical affiliation to the Holy Roman empire.

Finally, it was shown how heterarchical influences of religious, non-governmental interest groups on the process of urban planning could alter a city's social fabric:

Today, urban planning as a top-down, state-orchestrated hierarchical process to interconnect people, places, activities and territories had become vulnerable to a variety of heterarchical forces undermining the city. Especially religious, non-governmental organization extended their influence on the social and spatial structure of cities by engaging gentrification processes and therefore challenging established power structures. Using the example of a religious neighbourhood, a clearly demarcated area within the Israeli city of Acre, NIMROD LUZ (Sea of Galilee) revealed how privileged Jewish residents installed a suburbia, a *religiocity*, to avoid religious heterogeneity by constructing and securing sociospatial boundaries within the city, thus altering its image.

SANJAY SRIVASTAVA (Delhi) discussed a similar development from the emergence of urban *theo-topias* through the informal processes that produced religion-specific spaces, in the city of Gurgaon southwest of Delhi. Here, a lack of urban religious planning allowed heterarchical forces with capital and power to create their own spaces, and therefore contributed to the re-shaping of class identities, installing a new „ordinary“, the middle-class Hindu, opposed to the rather unskilled Muslim, and restricting the fluidity, a former constituting feature of a city. This development benefitted significantly from the unequal legibility of urban authorities, awarding the „proper“ use of urban space to the privileged Hindu.

The final discussion revealed some reservations about heterarchy as a concept, culminating both in the provocative question if heterarchies actually were everywhere, and in the critique in using limiting, binary categories instead of directly inquiring claims and challenges of authority. The general tenor of the conference, however, was in approval of heterarchy as a heuristic, analytical tool, allowing, above all, changes in perspective of perceiving power relations in the humanities.

Susanne Rau put it in a nutshell when elaborating on how the modern era influenced our way of thinking in simple hierarchies, leading us to lose our ability to recognize and understand complex relationships in group formation and the exercise and distribution of power and responsibilities. Raising awareness of heterarchies, temporally and locally identifiable constellations existing at the same time within multiple resources of power, will contribute to successfully reassessing history.

Conference overview:

Welcome and Introduction to the Conference

Emiliano Rubens Urciuoli / Susanne Rau / Jörg Rüpke (University of Erfurt)

Panel 1: Birthing Heterarchies: Archaic Cities, Archaizing Religions
Chair: Elisa Iori (University of Erfurt)

Francesca Fulminante (University of Bristol & Royal Holloway | University Rome Tre): Exploring Hierarchies and Heterarchies at the Birth of First Cities and State Organization in Pre- and Proto-Historic Central Italy

Asuman Lätzer-Lasar (University of Erfurt): Emergent Religious Authority: The Archaistic Look of the Mater Magna Priests

Panel 2: „Religiocities" and „Urban Theo-Topias": When Planning Faces Heterarchy
Chair: Martin Fuchs (University of Erfurt)

Nimrod Luz (Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee): Religious Gentrification and Heterarchies of Urban Planning: Reflections on the Religious Neighbourhood in Acre

Sanjay Srivastava (Institute of Economic Growth of Delhi, *via Skype*): Urban Theo-Topias: Religious Claims to Space and the Language of Administrative Rationality in the New City of Gurgaon, Delhi

Panel 3: Claiming the Street, Staging the Order: Heterarchical Views of Processions
Chair: Susanne Rau (University of Erfurt)

Simone Wagner (University of Erfurt): Contested Hierarchies. Authority, Processions, and Heterarchies of Monasteries in the City of Constance

Bärbel Beinhauer-Köhler (Philipps-University of Marburg): The Patriarch's Visit to the Vizier: A Coptic Chronicle Mediating Different „Publics" in Fatimid Cairo

Panel 4: One City, Many Powers: Cases of Intra-Urban Heterarchies
Chair: Emiliano Rubens Urciuoli (University of Erfurt)

Jörg Rüpke (University of Erfurt): Religious Changes in an Urban Rome and the Cities of the Western Empire: Looking at Urbanized Religion

Susanne Rau (University of Erfurt): Canons, Aldermen and Confrères: Changing Power Constellations in the City of Lyon (Late Middle Ages, Early Modern Times)

Panel 5: Untenable Hierarchies: Sacred Orders and Reality Checks
Chair: Simone Wagner (University of Erfurt)

Emiliano Rubens Urciuoli (University of Erfurt): When Intellectualism Confronts Heterarchy: The Case of Cyprian of Carthage

Ronie Parciack (Tel Aviv University): Hierarchy into Heterarchy: Reshuffling the Cards of Authority in Urban Spaces between India and the Hijaz

Panel 6: Media and Money: Religious Minorities in Different Urban Rankings
Chair: Martin Christ (University of Erfurt)

Miri Rubin (Queen Mary University of London): Sisters, No Longer: Ecclesia and Synagoga in Urban Space

Jessy Spohnholz (Washington State University): Fractured Lives: The Challenges of Sixteenth-Century Netherlandish Exiles in German Urban Communities

Panel 7: Emplaced Heterarchies: The Urban Location of Religious Authorities

Chair: Asuman Lätzer-Lasar (University of Erfurt)

Anne Murphy (University of British Columbia): Articulations of Heterarchical Power Relations at the Intersections of the Urban, Semi-Urban and Rural in Hīr, the 18th Century Punjabi-Language Text by Waris Shah

Katalin Szende (Central European University of Budapest): From Model to Rival? Competition or Complementarity in Bishop's Seats in East-Central Europe

Panel 8: Centrality Revised: Centre and Periphery Through the Lens of Heterarchy
Chair: Sara Keller (University of Erfurt)

Shana Zaia (University of Vienna): In the Shadow of Nineveh: Assessing Hierarchies and Heterarchies of Temples and Cult Cities in the Neo-Assyrian Empire

Final Discussion
introduced by Emiliano Rubens Urciuoli, Susanne Rau and Jörg Rüpke

Tagungsbericht *Urban Heterarchies: Changing Religious Authority and Social Power in Cities*. 11.12.2019–13.12.2019, Erfurt, in: H-Soz-Kult 31.01.2020.