



RELIGIOUS STUDIES WORKSHOP SERIES

XVI. THE SCHOLAR'S MIRACULOUS CATCH? THE RELEVANCE AND ISSUES OF ARCHIVAL RESEARCH FOR RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Samuel R. Thévoz

Archival research is a key and fruitful feature of any genealogical approach in humanities as it centrally contributes to shedding light on invisible, obscure or blurred aspects of subjects under the scrutiny of scholars and students. Religious Studies are a major epistemological conduit in that regard, for example in questioning the formation and transformation of beliefs and worldviews or in assessing the individual spiritual experience vis-à-vis the public religious discourse. But how can one locate relevant material? What general issues are to be expected? Which mindset should one adopt in the process? How to deal with often confidential, private or even intimate documents? What outcomes can be anticipated or rather can outcomes be anticipated at all? Capitalizing on my own experience in archive collections, I will present concrete examples that illustrate this set of questions.

Samuel R. Thévoz is an FWF Fellow at the Department of Religious Studies of the University of Vienna. He holds a licence ès lettres (2001) in French Studies, Religious Studies, and English Studies and a Ph.D. (2008) in French Literature from the University of Lausanne. Since 2018, he has worked as an independent scholar associated with the THALIM-research unit (UMR 7172 “Theory and History of Modern Arts and Literature” —Sorbonne University nouvelle Paris-3, National Center for Scientific Re-search, École normale supérieure). A specialist of French literary and cultural history, he has chiefly worked at the crossroads of Literary Studies and Religious Studies. His main research interests include the perception of Tibet in European travel literature, academia, and esotericism; French and Swiss women travellers to Asia; the first travel accounts of Tibetans and Asian Buddhists to France and Europe; the cultural history of Tibetan and Buddhist studies in France; and the reception of Buddhism and yoga in literary, theatrical, artistic, scholarly, and esoteric milieus from a global perspective, with special attention to France, Switzerland, and Belgium.

13 January 2025

11:30-12:15

Seminar Room 3 (Ground floor)