***RELIGION AND WAR FROM ANTIQUITY TO EARLY MODERNITY***

***Historical Varieties of a Recurring Nexus***

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**ABSTRACTS** (by speaker, in alphabetical order)

**Niv ALLON**

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***War and Order in New Kingdom Egypt (1550-1070 B.C.)***

The cosmic struggle between order and chaos could, in theory, have easily lent itself to inspire more earthly battles. As ancient Egyptian sovereignty was conceived as a divine state of order, any attempt to threaten it would be by extension a transgression against divine will and a crime against Maat—the Egyptian term for justice and cosmic order and the personified goddess

thereof. Campaigns beyond the border fit into this framework as well, since Egypt is the pinnacle

of the organized world, an island in a sea of chaos. By expanding the borders of Egypt, the king

could mirror the sun god dispelling forces of chaos and establishing Maat. Through this

paradigm, all Egyptian wars are just.

A survey of royal inscriptions of the New Kingdom reveals, however, that war is hardly

ever framed in these terms of order and chaos in ancient sources. Ancient Egyptians kings

showed a keen interest in subduing their neighboring countries from Egypt’s earliest days, but

kings of this period were remarkably eager to do so. On their monuments, Maat is a common

theme, shown held in their hands in statuary and on temple walls, or frequently appearing in their

titularies. Although one could hardly think of a more appreciate context for kings to take in their

triumph over chaos than in their inscriptions that commemorate military endeavors, neither

enemy appears as an agent of chaos, nor king as a champion of order.

This lack of references to Maat concerning worldly wars invites us to develop a more

complex model, in which royal prerogative and divine will are at play. First, exploring royal

inscriptions of the New Kingdom, this paper will suggest that ambguitiy in central to the role of

the divine in the initiation of war. Decreeing the enemy’s fall and the king’s victory, the gods

could be understood as initatiors of violence or the king’s aides on his own mission. Only a few

kings clearly define the gods’ role in the war, and this paper will explore their inscriptions as

well as those of other rulers of this period.

**Mary R. BACHVAROVA**

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***God as Judge: The Interlocking Hittite Genres of Treaty, Prayer, and Historiography and their Nachleben in the Hebrew Bible***

For the Hittite kings occupying Late Bronze Age Anatolia and north Syria, *arkuwar* ("legal case") prayers, diplomatic letters, historiography, and sworn contracts (*ishiul*), including international treaties (also called *taksul*), were complementary genres used to justify their military and diplomatic policies before the gods. Indeed, two early Hittite royal prayers (ca. 1500-1400 BCE) present themselves as contracts between the king and the gods, granting administrative powers to the king over the territory won by him through the gods' support (*CTH* 389.2, 414.1), as explained in the historiographic texts. With this background information, we can take a new approach to explaining, 1) the parallels between Hittite *arkuwar* prayers and Biblical arguments with, and complaints to, Yahweh (e.g., Josh 7: 7-9, concerning an unexpected defeat); and 2) parallels between Hittite vassal treaties and the framing of the covenant between Yahweh and his chosen people that transferred ownership to them of already occupied lands.

The prayers would have travelled in the same way as the treaty formulas, not through population movements, but by means of public oral performances before a copy of a treaty, edict, or diplomatic letter displayed beside the statue of the relevant divinity in his/her temple as he or she passed judgment in the international dispute. That is, the contractual process itself provided the means of geographic transfer of region-specific practices. Hittite secundogenitures at Carchemish and Aleppo would have engaged in the full gamut of activities surrounding treaties and other sworn agreements, including *arkuwars* expiating their own actions in violation of *ishiul*s with humans or gods (e.g., *CTH* 382, §4) and complaining about the gods' evident anger, which was demonstrated by defeats at the hands of "arrogant" treaty-violators and other misfortunes affecting the state. Because Neo-Hittite states in Syria chose to retain some Hittite ways of justifying hegemony, the relevant practices could have continued well into the Iron Age, before the area was subjugated by the Assyrians, who imposed the Assyrian-style treaty practices that so obviously influenced, e.g., Deuteronomy 28. Moreover, the Hittite royal *arkuwar* prayers put a new focus on the innovative role taken by non-royal Israelite leaders as privileged intermediaries with God, which went hand in hand with eliminating the king as the responsible partner in the contractual relationship between YHWH and his people. Finally, Hittite historiography proves to be an important precursor of the historiographic viewpoint in the Hebrew Bible, intent on explaining the reasons for the Israelites' successes and failures in taking possession of the land promised to them by YHWH.

**Pr. Dr. Yann BERTHELET**

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***Military auspices of Roman generals at the end of the Republic***

*Cic., Diu., 2, 76-77: Bellicam rem administrari maiores nostri nisi auspicato noluerunt ; quam multi anni sunt, cum bella a proconsulibus et a propraetoribus administrantur, qui auspicia non habent ! Itaque nec amnis transeunt auspicato nec tripudio auspicantur. Vbi ergo auium diuinatio ? quae, quoniam ab iis, qui auspicia nulla habent, bella administrantur, ad urbanas <res> retenta uidetur, a bellicis esse sublata. Nam ex acuminibus quidem, quod totum auspicium militare est, iam M. Marcellus ille quinquiens consul totum omisit, idem imperator, idem augur optumus.*

The paper aims to explain the strange remarks of Marcus (one of the protagonists of Cicero’s *De Diuinatione*) quoted in the epigraph, who both asserts that the auspices are neglected in the military sphere at his time, unlike in the civilian sphere, and suggests a larger plurality and a more complex typology of military auspices than the one that the *breuitas* of the sources generally allows us to apprehend. This testimony, which invites us to think about the historical evolution of a central ritual in the functioning of Roman republican institutions, will be compared with other contemporary sources where military auspices are discussed, not only those of generals in the field, but also those of magistrates presiding over the *comitia centuriata*, conceived by the Romans as the *exercitus urbanus*. The in-depth analysis of the episode of the defective auspices of Tiberius Gracchus, the consul of 163 BC, mentioned several times, among others, by Cicero, will show that the boundary of the *pomerium* between *auspicia urbana* and *auspicia militaria* did not exactly overlap with the distinction between *imperium domi* and *imperium militiae*, the latter distinction being based rather on the duality between the magistrate’s auspices for coming into office and his departure auspices for war or for a province. This difference between the two ritual and legal pairs “auspices for coming into office/departure auspices” and “*auspicia urbana/auspicia militaria*” will then make it possible to highlight the distinction between the magistrate’s investing auspices **(**auspices for coming into office and departure auspices) and the auspices that the general still had to take before each new battle, and even originally, if we follow Cicero, at each river crossing. In this way, we hope to reveal the evolution of the relations between the *imperium militiae* and the auspices of the Roman generals in the last two centuries of the Republic, and to emphasize the consequences of this evolution on the institutional balance between *potestas* and *auctoritas*, that is to say the ideological basis guaranteeing the aristocratic nature of the regime.

**Jaakko BJÖRKLUND**

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***Huguenots in the Baltics: religion, identity and service of French mercenaries in the Swedish army 1605 – 1614***

From 1560 to 1629, Sweden was almost continuously at war in the Baltics against either Poland-Lithuania, Russia, or both. The conflict was essentially economic and political: control of Baltic Sea trade routes and struggle over the power vacuum left by the collapse of the Teutonic order. However, around the turn of the century, confessional strife became an intensifying factor. Duke Charles of Södermanland used anti-catholic sentiment to depose his niece Sigismund I (also Sigismund III of Poland-Lithuania), and crown himself king Charles IX of Sweden. The war moved from Sweden to Livonia where, after some initial success, the Swedish army was virtually annihilated in 1605 at the battle of Kirkholm.

In the wake of that disaster, Sweden became increasingly dependent on foreign support and troops. The anti-catholic cause was harnessed in full to legitimize the war in the eyes of protestant potentates. The catholic enemy was demonized and the protestant identity of the troops emphasized to enforce the juxtaposition of “us” versus “them”. Abroad, protestant networks were accessed to find military enterprisers willing to recruit mercenaries for service in the Baltics. Many answered the call, and by 1610, perhaps some 12.000 – 15.000 foreigners entered Swedish service. Most were protestants, recruited primarily from the British Isles (Scots in particular), in northern Germany, and amongst French Huguenots.

Focusing mainly on the Huguenot troops, I address the question of how religious identity was used to recruit the mercenaries, and to what degree we can perceive religion as a motive for foreign troops to contract to serve in the Swedish army. Furthermore, I explore the ways in which religious identity espoused itself within and between different detachments of the Swedish army and whether we can perceive any influence this might have had on their conduct during the war.

**Dr. Nunzia CIANO**

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***Religion, civil wars, and the power of the word in Cicero’s speeches***

The last decades of the Roman Republic were dominated by internal conflicts referred to in Latin as *bella civilia -* “civil wars.” Together, these two words express a paradox (Latin *bella* refers to wars with external enemies) which reflects that the state of armed conflict among citizens (with the exception of the conflicts between patricians and plebeians up to the 4th century BC) had been somewhat unusual in the Roman republic. The civil wars nonetheless share with previous Roman wars their peculiar religious construction, with religion proving useful to legitimize taking military actions and to bestow prestige on military success. In the case of civil wars, there is also a religious discrediting of the opponent, who is often accused of impiety or waging an impious conflict. This clashes with the concept of *bellum iustum*, which is traditionally theorized by *ius fetiale* and finds its highest expression in Cicero, the most important literary source of the religious demonization of opponents of his own politics or of the Roman republic. My paper will analyze one or more selected speeches of Cicero to see how religious ideas and arguments are embedded in his rhetorical strategy and political discourse. By doing so, I will reveal the reasons for and against civil wars or political conflicts that Cicero was prominently involved in, too. The paper will also focus on the figure of Cicero himself in opposition to his personal enemies, especially in those cases where they are portrayed by the orator as state enemies, too. In this case, Cicero emerges as divine man, as someone who has received divine support in his political actions. From the linguistic perspective of Cicero’s verbal invective, learned divine talk strengthens his divine rule as defender of the republican state.

**Dr Jorge FERNÁNDEZ-SANTOS**

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***Queen Regnant and Holy War: Rearguard Female Crusader Isabel I of Castile***

In the mediaeval Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula women were not excluded in

principle from the line of succession to the various thrones: Leon, Castile, Aragon, and Navarre.

Yet Isabel’s accession in 1474 after the death of her brother Henry IV was perceived (and indeed

was) unprecedented. Regnant queens were supposed to leave the business of government in the

hands of their husbands acting as bajuli (Petronila I of Aragon or Sancha of Leon) or pass their

rights to their sons (Berengaria I of Castile). The system of marital (or filial) tutorship was also

practised in Navarre: Joan I, Joan II and Blanche I —Eleanor I and Catherine I would succeed

shortly after Isabel of Castile. Isabel’s subjects could produce but one Castilian example of a

queen effectively engaged suo iure in both government and warfare: Urraca I of Castile and Leon.

Yet, unlike her twelfth-century predecessor, Isabel would not have to fight husband and son to

assert her own right to rule. Somewhere between the time of Isabel’s final victory in 1479 over

the rival claimant backed by Portugal —her niece Joan— and her plans to reactivate the war against

Nasrid Granada in 1482 there surfaced the reality of a female ruler spearheading Castile’s bid to

conquer the last stronghold of Islam in western Europe and along with it the need to legitimise

her role as leader of a Holy War. The paper will focus on the fashioning of Isabel as a rearguard

female crusader directly and indirectly involved in explicitly religious warfare. The extant

chronicles will be analysed from this standpoint alongside images in different media designed to

broadcast the queen’s prestige in military/religious terms. At the bidding of her husband

Ferdinand II of Aragon, Isabel made an appearance on 7 November 1489 to boost the morale of

the troops sieging Baza. She also helped set up the equivalent of field hospitals to care for the

wounded. The religious underpinning of Isabel’s political and diplomatic characterisation and

the efforts to reformulate the miles Christi ideal to fit a ruling queen will be specifically addressed.

**Dr Amir GILAN**

Lecturer in Hittology, The Lester and Sally Entin Faculty of Humanities, Tel Aviv University

***The Revelation of Divine Power in Battle – As witnessed by Muršili II and Ḫattušili III of Ḫattuša***

The paper will explore two famous occurrences in which divine power was revealed to Hittite kings during battle. The first occurred during the final battle between Ḫattušili III and Urḫi-Teššub at the town of Šamuḫa. During that battle, the goddess Šawoška’s ‘divine providence’ was revealed to Ḫattušili by the sudden collapse of a massive portion of the fortification wall defending Šamuḫa, leading to the capture of Urḫi-Teššub. A similar manifestation of divine power in ‘action’ was revealed to Muršili II, Ḫattušili’s father, in his third-year campaign against Uḫḫaziti, king of Arzawa. The event, a lightning bolt that was shot by the ‘mighty’ Storm-God before the campaign, bringing Uḫḫaziti to his knees and securing a Hittite victory, is reported in both the ten-years annals and the extensive annals.

The paper will address several questions that arise from these two occurrences and their depiction in Hittite historiography. It will also outline the considerable religious significance of these two revelations.

**Dr Jan Willem HONIG**

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***Divine Judgement, Battle and Strategy in the Early Part of the Hundred Years’ War***

War is a risky business. As the unique province of social interaction where death, rightfully, may be inflicted on fellow human beings, unrestrained violence seems best placed to take sole possession of the field. Religion, if it plays a material part, is often regarded as offering a hortatory, extremist justification for a process that is already rife with inherent escalatory tendencies. However, in my contribution, which builds on earlier work on the 1415 Agincourt campaign, I show that the campaigns of Edward III against his royal competitors in France in the middle of the 14th century provide strong evidence of religion’s risk mitigation properties. A religiously informed belief among antagonists that saw battle as an appeal to divine judgement and that as such put it at the centre of strategic action, permitted the English king to take what to modern strategists looks like excessive, even suicidal risk. Battle’s religiously sanctioned decisiveness made it a desired, yet feared instrument, at once something that must be sought, yet at the same time avoided. This mental prism permitted a whole host of military activities to take place that, under other circumstances, would have spelled the certain ruin of armies — most critically, it allowed English armies repeatedly to penetrate deep into enemy territory with greatly inferior forces and engage nonetheless in a relatively safe cat-and-mouse game with the French.

**Dr Alan JAMES**

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***Cardinal-Ministers and Warrior Priests: Religion and the Making of the Westphalian World Order***

‘Religion’ and ‘war’ are key, complementary themes that have shaped the construction of the memory of the Peace of Westphalia of 1648 along with the curiously resilient view that it was the defining moment of modernity in international relations. Indeed, the idea of a modern ‘Westphalian order’ of sovereign, territorial states requires two foundational premises: that the war from which it emerged was of unparalleled ruthlessness and violence and that, as a response by the international community, religion henceforth declined as a source of conflict. In many respects, these positions are both exaggerated or can be shown to need serious qualification. The real problem, however, is that in treating religion and international war discretely, historians have elaborated distinct sets of assumptions which are nevertheless mutually-reinforcing. As a result, the ability to challenge the ‘myth’ of Westphalia has been very severely restricted. It has been largely limited to debates about the timing or location of change either in the secularisation of statecraft or in military developments. Rarely, however, are the fundamental principles underpinning the traditional understanding of Westphalia or the presumed causal relations of change behind it questioned. It will be argued that in order to understand better the role of religion in international politics or indeed changes in the very conduct of war itself, we must consider both together. In other words, we must make an effort to define and to locate historical circumstances that reveal the nexus of religion and war. The primary example offered will be the career of Henri d’Escoubleau de Sourdis, the Archbishop of Bordeaux. He was a controversial figure who was given command of French naval forces in war against Spain by Cardinal Richelieu in the 1630s and who wrote about the duty of clerics to go to war. His theological justifications of violence, his place in the church and wider influence, along with his relationship with Richelieu, and the conduct of the war all reveal the artificiality of separating religion and war as critical historical themes. The case will be made, therefore, for a more integrated approach to the study of war in the past which was shaped as much by religion as it was by the operational decisions in the battlefield or at sea.

**Ben KOLBECK**

PhD candidate, Department of Classics, King’s College London

***The Early Church and War: The Evidence of Tertullian***

The ancient Christian attitude to war has long interested scholars – particularly Church historians. Was the early Church a peaceful institution, corrupted by power only after Constantine’s conversion? Or was it always willing to countenance force when expedient? This question has long been intertwined with current events, the attitudes of many scholars coloured by their experience of war in the early twentieth century, and their own religious convictions. While these issues are less acute today, modern scholarship inherited the research questions and the basic framing of the problem from those earlier investigators, such as Harnack, Cadoux, Moffat, and Bainton. Their biases may have been recognised and rejected, but modern work fundamentally follows in their footsteps.

Tertullian furnishes singularly relevant testimony for this tradition. Confusingly, he provides contradictory statements about his attitude to the Roman military. Which represents the Church Father’s ‘true’ feelings ‘– the apparently positive endorsement to Christian military service in the *Apology*, or the intolerant injunctions of later treatises, such as *On idolatry* and *On the military crown*? Moreover, what motivates the later hostility – a hatred of idolatry, or a Christian abhorrence of violence? Scholars have endorsed each of these positions, but I argue that the central assumption underpinning them – that it is possible to uncover Tertullian’s ‘true’ view of the military (or of early Christians in general) to the army and war – is incorrect, at least in the way traditionally envisaged. The statements that Tertullian made about the military, and by extension those of other Church fathers too, must be viewed as rhetorical artefacts, part of a complex process by which early Christian writers constructed their position in the Roman world. Tertullian’s ambiguous views reflect a multi-faceted relationship, real and imagined, between the Roman state (often represented by the army) and early Christians. None of them are ‘true’ or ‘false’, but each presents a different side to meet changing literary, rhetorical, and social purposes. Only by setting these texts in their proper historical and intellectual contexts can we unlock the fullness of the perspectives they offer into the early Christian thought-world and its response to war and the military.

**Dr Jack LENNON**

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***‘The Greatest Impiety’: Pollution and Divine Anger in Rome’s Civil Wars***

Religion played integral role in the execution of Roman warfare and at every stage of her military campaigns the Roman state worked to ensure that the state’s relationship with the gods was assured. The gods were believed to take an active interest in the Roman state, and their meticulous approach to the divine was believed to have played an essential role in Rome’s enduring military success. Across Roman religion we also see an enduring concern about ritual purity and pollution, and the language and imagery of dirt, disease and staining was frequently employed as a means of conceptualising or revealing ritual errors and even divine displeasure. This was especially apparent than when the Roman state (most typically exemplified by the political elite) experienced disharmony and reached its zenith once political infighting boiled over into open civil war. Latin literature reveals a seemingly universal acceptance of the view that civil war was the ultimate affront to religion and the greatest and most severe cause of pollution. At the same time, this tradition acknowledged that the Roman state was stained by civil bloodshed from its very inception through Romulus’ murder of his brother Remus.

This paper will consider the various ways that pollution and impurity were conceptualised within the landscape of civil war where they might serve to demonstrate divine anger and, in particular, to assign culpability by later writers. Beginning with the civil wars and infighting of the late Republic, the paper will consider the legacy of these conflicts under the early Empire, concluding with an analysis of the role of religious pollution in Tacitus’ *Histories* and their account of the wars surrounding the ‘Year of the Four Emperors’ in AD 69.

**Ivan MARIC**

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***The effects of the Arab siege of Constantinople 717-8 on Byzantine ideology and Muslim-Christian polemic***

“It is with the strength of our walls that they will come to trust the strength of our faith.”\*

Following a seemingly unstoppable onslaught of the Arab army in Asia Minor, the siege of Constantinople in 717-8 was the culmination of the existential crisis of the Byzantine empire and of the challenge to Christianity posed by the increasingly aggressive and vociferous proclamation of Islam, born in the second *fitna* and promoted by the Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 692-705). That the sense of doom was prevalent is best reflected in two apocalyptic texts composed on the eve of the siege, one even envisaging the Arab army breaching into the city. The salvation was nothing short of a miracle and the new emperor Leo III (r. 717-741) built up on this victory to consolidate his position in the capital but aiming at the audience outside the capital as well, visible in the refashioning of the imperial iconography characterized by the victory-giving Cross accompanied with the inscription “Jesus Christ Conquers.” Further developing the paradigm formulated under the emperor Justinian II (r. 685-695, 705-711) in the introductory note to the canons of the council in Trullo (692), Leo also promoted himself as *defensor fidei*. This role was further realized through the renewed diplomatic contact with the caliphate, the trace of which is preserved in the so-called letter of Leo III to ‘Umar II (r. 717-720)—the source which received a thorough re-assessment in recent scholarship (in the work of Jean-Marie Gaudeul, Jean-Pierre Mahé, and Tim Greenwood) and is considered as based on an authentic text. Several themes preserved in the letter correspond well with the rhetoric of the early post-718 period, and with the ideas espoused later in the law code promulgated by the emperor Leo III, the *Ekloga*, which addressed the subjects ‘outside the God-guarded city’ identified with the adjective ‘Χριστοσημείωτον, ‑α’ (“signed as Christ’s”), which is a hapax legomenon.

Combining the established corpus of byzantine material and textual sources, with the improved understanding of the often neglected Byzantine and non-Byzantine texts, I propose that the salvation of 717-8 was a pivotal moment that ushered a new chapter in the Muslim-Christian polemical discourse and the ideological developments under the emperor Leo III, including the inception of Iconoclasm; I further stress that the two cannot and must not be separated, as is still done in studies devoted to the Iconoclast controversy.

\*Abbot Cellah, *The Secret of Kells*, 2009, directed by Tomm Moore and co-directed by Nora Twomey, French-Belgian-Irish coproduction, 2009, the quote at 14 minutes 10-19 seconds running time of the movie. The animated movie *The Secret of Kells* is a dramatization of the context in which the famous Book of Kells is being created—the preparation of the Abbey for the impending assault of the Vikings, depicted as pagans and barbarians. The quote is chosen because the context and the presentation correspond remarkably well with the period of the impending Arab siege in 717-8 as it was depicted in the Byzantine sources, and the relevance of the quote visible in Byzantine texts in the aftermath of the siege.

**Dr Francesca NEBIOLO**

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***Gods bless war! Oath and perjury in the Mesopotamian perception of war***

Ancient Mesopotamia, at the beginning of the second millennium, seems to be experiencing a state of chronic instability, in which war was a constant of everyday life and the idea of war

seems to be perceived by communities as one of the key aspects of their existence. The

relationship of individuals with this semi-permanent state of war, betrays an almost positive

image of war for the conduct of the men’s life. In the human perception of the kingship, the

king receives the weapons from the gods as sign of power and with those weapons he has to

destroy the enemy. Reality or propaganda, the king shows not only his power in front of the

enemy but also the benevolence of the gods who chose and support him.

At the same time the war is strictly connected with the religious perception of the state and

the kingship. The gods are presented as those who "open weapons" to the king and his troops,

those who give their agreement to start the war and those who decide the destiny of the

opposing kingdoms.

Therefore, the war is submitted to the religious influence. The oracular interrogations and

prophecies before and during the war, especially at Mari, are well attested in the archives of

the time. Similarly, taking oath by the gods plays a fundamental role to enter in war, to justify

it, to manage the troops in a more practical way and to establish covenants and peace.

Through the oath as the most common religious act in the Old Babylonian society, it is

possible to find an important key to understand the way war was seen in ancient Mesopotamia

and the influence of supernatural power in the royal propaganda.

**Dr Madhavi NEVADER**

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**Dr Andrew MEIN**

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***Religion and War, War and Religion: Jerusalem 586 as Test***

Religion and war were a ubiquitous pairing in the ancient Near East. According to many political theologies of the second and first millennia BCE, to ‘war’ was to participate in and to maintain a divine order won through the cosmological vanquishing of equally cosmological enemies. Human wars were the continuation of a battle fought and won by the head of the pantheon at the start of time. They were thus irreducibly religious affairs. Our paper endeavours to explore the nexus between religion and war by looking at the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 586BCE from the perspective of both conquerors and conquered. From a Babylonian perspective, this war against rebellious vassals was part of a ‘civilising’ mission, bringing those from distant lands to the centre of the world in Babylon, where all may live under the shepherdship of Babylon’s god, Marduk. War is thus a religious duty and victory a confirmation of the religious worldview. On the other hand, the literature of the conquered Judahites does not offer a religious justification for going to war. Instead, the scale of the disaster required a religious explanation of the consequences of defeat. War becomes the just punishment of a national God, who uses the violent might of a foreign nation to discipline his people for religious apostasy.  And it is striking that it is not just war in general, but the particular outworkings of the Babylonian invasions of 597 and 586 that provided this opportunity for a scribal elite both to break and to remake the religious worldview they had inherited. If historians of religion in more modern periods have been slow to recognize the role of war as a catalyst for abrupt and far-reaching religious change, there may be much to learn from the biblical response to Jerusalem’s fall.

**Dr Nassima NEGGAZ**

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***The Role of Religion in the Mongol Conquest of Baghdad in 1258***

The Mongol conquest of 1258 put a swift end to the over five-century-old Abbasid caliphate. This event saw the convergence of a complex set of religious beliefs and ideas, which influenced not only the cause of the conquest itself, but also its conduct, as well as the consequences in its aftermath. This paper will delve into specific aspects of the role religion or rather *religions* played during this event.

First, the armies of Hulegu Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan, followed the *Great Yasa*, which prompted the Mongol rulers to believe they had a mission to conquer and rule the world. According to the *Yasa*, the aim of these conquests was to achieve universal peace and stability: an orderly way of life and social equality would ensue from the period of (often-violent) conquests.

Second, the planning and invasion of Baghdad followed a set of rules, which relate to the *Yasa* criminal law codes. The conquest itself is a particularly interesting case as it shows the influence of multiple faiths on the conduct of the war. Two examples can be cited here. According to several sources, upon taking control of Baghdad, Hulegu spared the lives of the Christian community due to a request by his favorite wife, the Christian Nestorian Doquz Khatun. Moreover, the fashion in which the caliph was put to death (being rolled in a carpet and kicked to death) was the outcome of superstitious beliefs held in the *Yasa*: the blood of a royal should not touch the ground for fear of a catastrophe happening.

Third, the aftermath of the invasion also held critical religious outcomes for Baghdad, but also the larger region: while Shi’ism expanded in the Ilkhanate -- particularly following the conversion of the Ilkhan Oljeitu to Shi’ism – the conduct of the war and the role played by various groups (in particular the Shi‘a) became a highly polemical topic within many Sunni circles, in particular the *‘ulama* (religious scholars). In this perspective, the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258 not only affected the religion of the Mongols (who converted *en masse* to Islam within the Ilkhanate), but it also had a sensible impact on the relations between the two major Islamic sects, Sunnis and Shi‘a.

**Daniil PLESHAK**

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***The Virgin Who Gave Birth to Victory: Divine Help to Besieged Cities during Avar-Byzantine Wars***

Peculiarity of siege warfare is that it involves not only combatants, but also a large number of civilians. It is particularly true for Pre-Modern era, when the majority of military action took place in the large open spaces, thus not affecting populous places. The threat of physical violence during a siege and expectation of subsequent pillaging invoked anxiety in the city’s populace. One of the ways of seeking a salvation from this calamity was invocation to supernatural help. Had the siege been cancelled and city relieved, the saint patron would be praised for such an outcome, and a subsequent veneration of the saint would be established. In my paper I would like to explore narratives of miraculous saving of two cities by divine figures during Byzantine-Avar wars of the late 6th and early 7th centuries.

The main topic of interest is the 626 Avar siege of Constantinople, which, according to the sources was interrupted by intervention of Holy Mary who destroyed Slav fleet with a storm and personally took part in the battle. I establish research on three contemporary sources, (Theodoros Syncellos, George of Pisidia and *Chronicon Paschale*), to get a broader perspective I will turn my attention to the *Acts of Saint Demetrius*, which contain several accounts of the saint saving Thessaloniki from Avar sieges.

What interests me most in this topic how the sources emagine the actual mechanics of such intervention. First of all, I would like to especially pay attention to the procedure of calling to divine help, and the reasons given why a sacred figure responded to those calls. Also, it is equally important to investigate the way supernatural powers are supposed to influence the outcome of the battle, was it actual physical harm done to the enemy, influence on their morale or their use of natural phenomena, or the combination thereof. Finally, I touch upon establishment of new religious customs that celebrate miraculous salvation of those cities.

**Dr Seth RICHARDSON**

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***“The plans of the gods are destroyed”: Babylonian doubts about the gods and war***

  “When battle approaches, when war arises,” runs a Sumerian proverb, “the plans of the gods, beloved by the gods, are destroyed.” This sentiment may surprise us, given that so many Mesopotamian myths, royal inscriptions, and hymns to the gods openly valorized divine warfare and the battle prowess of the gods. The gods were repeatedly apostrophized in martial terms as divine beings who strode into battle in the vanguard, at the side of the king; who bore fifty-headed maces and battle-nets, ensnaring whole nations; “drenched in blood,” “covered in gore,” “smashing skulls,” etc. Through a plenitude of such descriptions, warfare and the project of war was re-inscribed as a regular, natural, and even ideal function of the Babylonian king, state, and cosmos. But exclusive attention to this celebratory evidence, implies 1) that the precept of divinely-sanctioned war reflected a typical or apical cultural value; and 2) that warfighting as such was the primary topical focus of attention to the role of gods and war. This paper will gather evidence from Mesopotamian literatures less focused on institutional celebration—including omens, proverbs, and various expressive works, spanning the Middle Bronze to Iron Ages—to further three points. The first is to illustrate how generically-bound the trope of Mesopotamian “religious war” really was, and how correspondingly little attention was paid to it in other literatures. The second is to argue that a broad acceptance of a divine-war trope as normative says less about its currency in Mesopotamian culture, and more about modern explanatory teleologies which model violence as inherently primitive and most at home in the deep past and early states. The third and most important is to offer a more nuanced idea of Babylonian ideas about the roles of the gods in and at war, with special attention paid to the social effects of war on civilians. Here we can rescue some perspectives which openly doubted the efficacy, propriety, or even relevance of theologically-justified war. Though these more critical views cannot be said to reflect popular ideas of “the people” (i.e., those entirely outside the state apparatus), they do reflect a more complex politics in which war was a contingent socio-historical phenomenon which functioned to limit the relations of state and society.

**Professor Penny ROBERTS**

Professor, Department History; Chair of the Faculty of Arts, Warwick University

***God’s Warriors in the Most Christian Kingdom: a Reconsideration of the French Religious Wars***

The French Wars of Religion are often presented as the quintessential religious war and the Most Christian king of France presided over the most bloody and divisive civil war of the Reformation period. The ‘wars’ or ‘troubles’ as contemporaries referred to them, divided the French army, pitting former noble comrades against one another. Their motivation was, and is, often seen as cynically driven by self-interest and greed for power rather than any higher calling. Indeed, in many ways, the wars were no different in religious terms than those which preceded them, with victories and deaths in battle determining whose side God was on. However, it will be argued that there was a new degree of intensity to a struggle that was framed in spiritual terms, and that was contributing to a wider international struggle between Protestants and Catholics.

**Professor Alec RYRIE**

Professor, Department of Theology and Religion, Durham University

***Was Religious War a Secularising Force in the Reformation Era?***

The problem with this question is that it is too easily answered. 'Yes': here the argument turns on conflict alienating observers who begin by deploring partisanship; who proceed, like Montaigne or Bodin, to detaching themselves from the fray; and who end by withdrawing into a secular sphere which sees religious indifference as the only route to peace. 'No': here the argument turns on how violence polarizes, how martyrdoms and atrocities reinforce religious narratives, and how armies such as the English New Model Army could become accelerants of religious radicalization. This paper will not attempt to weight these arguments against one another in order to judge which is correct. Instead it will begin from the assumption that both are true, and attempt to use this fact to tease out a more subtle history of the connection in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries between (on the one hand) war and other forms of violence, and (on the other) faith, doubt, religious alienation and conversion. With particular attention to Scotland, England and the Netherlands, it will concentrate on warfare as an agent of sudden rupture and destabilization, arguing that this by its nature prevented war from having a consistent and unidirectional influence on the interplay between religion and irreligion in this period.

**Professor Anthony SPALINGER**

Department of Classics and Ancient History, The University of Auckland

***Pharaoh and God before and during Battle: Three Cases from the Egyptian New* *Kingdom and the Late Period***

The role of religion and of the major deity of Egypt, Amun, in warfare from the New Kingdom on, was not indicated to any major extent in the pictorial and written evidence. This is often seen to be "obvious," and thus not needing overt stress. An additional argument has been that only at the very beginning of a pharaoh's campaign, as well as at the very end, is there revealed the intimate and interlocked nature of the Egyptian "state deity" and the Egyptian general-pharaoh. The following study will attempt to provide a more nuanced interpretation of religion and warfare while exploring the literary qualities of the inscriptions. By and large, if the narrative account is lengthy and is a true literary production, then the role of Egypt's gods is stressed.

**Yuri STOYANOV**

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***The Religious Dimension of the “Last Great War of Antiquity” (603-628) and its Medieval Legacies***

The diverse political, military, religious and cultural facets of the last Sasanian Persian-East Roman/Byzantine war (603-628), considered antiquity’s last great war of have remained the focus of intense scholarly study and debate, lately stimulated by reappraisals of the provenance and agendas of the extant written sources as well as recent advances in the archaeology of seventh-century Asia Minor, Transcaucasia, Syria, Palestine and Egypt, which served as the arena of much of the military operations. Earlier Eastern Roman-Sasanian inter-imperial conflicts often had a distinctive religious dimension which was to be emphasized and exploited during the 603-628 war, especially after the Sasanian conquest of Palestine and Jerusalem in 614 (and their seizure of the Holy Sepulchre’s True Cross), which made the religious stakes significantly higher. The perceived religious dimension of the Sasanian conquest was further emphasized by reports of a Persian-Jewish military alliance in Palestine and Jewish ascendancy and renewed cult observances in Jerusalem.

The subsequent Byzantine counter-offensive was accompanied by the sustained anti-Sasanian religio-political propaganda of Emperor Heraclius’ (610-641) court and the paper will explore the provenance of its principal notions against the background of the advancing Christianization of the inherited Roman political-military ideology and increasing ecclesiastical and lay concern with the status of the Christian soldier. The paper will focus on the Heraclian court’s strategic use of eschatological traditions and prophecies to intensify the conflict’s religious dimension, conduct and goals, including the innovative (if short-lived) introduction of the notion of military martyrdom in Byzantine warfare ideology. The paper will also chart the lasting cross-cultural impact and *Nachleben* of the religious and eschatological elements in this Heraclian warfare ideology in medieval Eastern Christendom, the Byzantine Commonwealth and crusading narratives and lore regarding Jerusalem and the Holy Land, ranging from the legitimization and moral justification of Christian involvement in warfare to invoking divine command and framing hostilities in religious terms in contests over sacred space, holy sites and relics.

**Professor Hans VAN WEES**

Grote Professor of Ancient History, Department of History, University College London

***Genocidal Gods in Archaic Greece***

Archaic Greek warfare has a reputation for being restrained and rule-bound, like a game or a ritual activity. This reputation is not well-deserved and derives mainly from nostalgically idealizing classical and later accounts of how much less brutal and destructive war used to be in the old days. One feature of archaic warfare is the idea that wars of annihilation – by massacring or selling into slavery an entire community and sometimes destroying its city and territory into the bargain – are justified and even necessary when the community in question has offended a god.

This paper will consider reflections of this idea in early poetry, in the so-called Amphictyonic Oath, and in traditions about archaic wars, and ask to what extent these represent historical practice, and, insofar as they do, whether the motivations for such ‘genocidal’ wars were indeed primarily religious.

**Prof. Xianhua WANG**

Dean of Institute for the Global History of Civilizations, Shanghai International Studies University

***The Holy War of Eannatum in Light of the Early Dynastic Central Babylonian Tradition***

Exceptions notwithstanding, when investigating the question of religion and war in the ancient Near East, scholarly attention has too often been directed towards the identification of the “theologies” of war in the historical periods. This applies all the way from Early Dynastic or Neo-Assyrian. Thanks to the comprehensibility of its documentation (particularly royal inscriptions), which is the Early Dynastic Lagašite kingdom, especially from the time of Eannatum, has sometimes been identified as presenting the first attestation of the concept of Holy War in recorded human history. Perhaps justifiably so, as the documentation does support such a labelling. On the other hand, the historical question of *how* the idea of Holy War came about for the first documentable time in human history has never been seriously dealt with.

It is the purpose of my paper to trace the formulation of this early concept of Holy War. This will be done by locating king Eannatum and the historical development of the Lagašite kingdom in broader Early Dynastic Mesopotamia, both in time and space (beyond the Lagaš-Umma border conflict). It will be argued that the Lagašite “theology of war” presumed the existence of, and actually borrowed from, the quite recently developed Central Babylonian Tradition, which had the characteristic of being a “theology” somewhat comparable to what the word might mean in our vocabulary. It will further be shown that it was through its application by Eannatum and others in their *Realpolitik* in Early Dynastic Babylonia that this Central Babylonian Tradition – in my view a somewhat “theological” tradition centered on the deity Enlil – successfully became part of the Mesopotamian politico-religious heritage that was to last for millennia.

**Dr Nili WAZANA**

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***Biblical "Laws of War": A View of War from the Side of the Vanquished***

War in the ancient Near East was often regarded as an advanced stage in an unsettled dispute. As a paraphrase on the famous adage of Carl von Clausewitz we may say that war was seen as a continuation of the policy of *gods* by other means. War was like a test expressing the verdict of gods in disputes between kingdoms, an “ordeal by battle". The Book of Deuteronomy is the only ancient Near-Eastern and Biblical legal corpus which extensively treats the question of correct wartime behavior. There are six such laws. Three are clustered together in chapter 20 (Deut. 20:1–9, 10–18, 19–20), and the other three are embedded in the following chapters (21:10–14; 23:10–15; 24:5). What, if any, was the role of “war laws” in a world which deemed the results of armed confrontations as an indication of divine justice? It appears that there was a distinction between rules that addressed the issue of initiating war and its justification (*jus ad bellum*=justice of war), and those that related to behavior during armed conflict, regardless of who was the initiating side (*jus in bello*= justice in war). This distinction, suggested by Hugo von Grotius, the 17th century theologian and legalist who is considered the father of international law, serves to shed light on the cases under study. This paper will analyze these unique “laws” in their historical and ideological setting – when Israel was a vassal of the Assyrian empire. Set in the period of the first world empire these “laws” are unprecedented, forming an important religious reaction to war and defeat, a window into the view of war from the side of the vanquished.

**Professor WHETHAM, David**

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***Professional Military Education in the Modern World: The Role and Influence of Religion***

Political, social and cultural context has an enormous influence on the way that armed forces around the world are trained and educated. As a component of Professional Military Education (PME), Professional Military *Ethics* Education (PMEE) is shaped by a number of questions, all of which are themselves heavily informed by this context and the role that the armed forces are expected to play in a particular society:

What is the goal - better people or more effective soldiers?

How is it best done - formal or informal teaching, structured or by osmosis?

Who should teach it - lawyers, chaplains, philosophers, officers, internal or external?

Who should own it - is this something that belongs to the chain of command, or is it a core competency that belongs to the Profession itself?

How do you measure its effectiveness - what metrics are appropriate for determining success/failure, and who is checking?

While it is but one of the influences that need to be taken into account, the role that religion plays in the public life of the state and its institutions, whether explicit or implicit, shapes the answers to these questions and has a profound impact on the way different military organisations around the world frame and respond to the challenges they see around them.

**Dr Shana ZAIA**

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow, Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of Vienna

***The Gods Who March Alongside Me: Religion and War in the Neo-Assyrian Empire***

Everything the Assyrian king did was at the command of and by the support of the gods, and military matters were no different. While the ancient Assyrians did not engage in “holy war” as we would understand it today, religion was fully embedded into warfare. Conquest was itself a divine imperative and the gods accompanied a king and his army into battle, their victories reaffirming their supremacy over the defeated people and their gods. In return for this success, the king would venerate his gods by setting up victory steles, staging triumphal marches, or dedicating the spoils of war to them and investing the growing imperial wealth into their temples. This paper will discuss the intersection of religion and war during the Neo-Assyrian period (c. 1000-610 BCE) using case studies such as the ideology behind deporting a conquered polity’s divine images and the roles of martial deities like Adad and Ištar in official cult and the performance of kingship.

**Professor Laura ZUCCONI**

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***Their Seed is No More: Rhetorical Strategies of Genocide in Ancient Egypt and the Bible***

Religious Violence is a function of political configurations of power (Cavanaugh 2009). Debate surrounds the issue of genocide in the Hebrew Bible with some evangelical Christians on one side claiming not only its historicity but also the justifiability of genocide. The other side is New Denialism which asserts that the historicity of Biblical genocides cannot be established thus it is a morally neutral text. Part of New Denialism dismisses the texts as hyperbole and propaganda (Rowlett 1996). Regardless of historicity, such ancient claims of genocide greatly impact the use and legitimization of modern forms of genocide. This study will analyze the rhetorical strategy in the Bible’s call for genocide in the context of earlier Egyptian claims of genocide as a means of highlighting their key features that influence modern religious violence.

The 19th Dynasty Pharaohs claimed to have eradicated both the Israelites (Merneptah Stele) and the Sea Peoples (Medinet Habu) yet they continued to exist. The phrase “their seed is no more” assuaged the populace in the face of a military draw or even a defeat by down playing the threat of the enemy’s continued existence. They still exist, they are not captives but they are completely impotent. This Egyptian rhetoric of genocide reinforced the display of an established political authority in the role of the Pharaoh. Similarly, the Hebrew Bible (I Sam 15) clearly states a call to genocide against the Amalekites in the form of a *herem*, dedicating something to god by killing it. Saul’s failure to accomplish this genocide can be read as a warning that obedience to god’s law supersedes secular political concerns. Destruction of an entire dynastic line is the equivalent and replaces the destruction of an entire people. This use of genocide established the authority of a Jerusalem based politico-religious power in contrast to rival claimants from Samaria.