Individualisation as a concept for historical research

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1 The problem: How to identify individualisation in the ancient history of religion?

Individualisation is a process that is neither coextensive nor restricted to modernity. This thesis is the starting point of the whole research enterprise formally opened by this conference on religious individualization in the Hellenistic and Roman period. The task, then, is to identify periods that are characterized by individualisation, and in particular individualisation in the medium of religion. As we have been reminded, there are many claims about periods of particular importance in terms of individualisation around, starting from the particular Hellenistic interest in the individual, parallel to the supposed doom of Greek poleis,¹ over Augustine and late antique Christianisation,² the Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment, thus entering the realm of Modernity (in the usual Eurocentric singular). More recently, other periods have been added, for example the European high middle ages.³ To add further periods to the list would hardly be of much interest in a longer historical perspective, but might have a contrary effect and suggest the real divide between modernity and all other periods before. There is nothing like the complex notion of de-traditionalisation, biographical approach to oneself, permanent reflexivity, and narcistic drive towards authenticity identified as typical of contemporary individualisation in a recent theological diagnosis.⁴

Such a list, easily supplemented by other attempts, at least points to an important research strategy, that is, to break down the notion into measureable parameters. Here, however, empirical sociological research has not been very enthusiastic about the notion of individualism. If the latter term is understood as describing de-traditionalisation and valuing individuality at the same time, questionnaire-based empirical data from Europe do not reveal stronger and weaker individualism, but many variances in the combination of its supposed factors.⁵ Already Robert Bellah’s and his collaborators’ more qualitative study in the United

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¹ E.g. Hossenfelder 1995, 32.
² E.g. Dumont 1986, 38-44.
³ Morris 1972 (I am grateful to Michael Borgolte, Erfurt/Berlin, for the reference).
⁴ Harskamp 2000 (I am grateful to Dietmar Mieth, Erfurt/Tübingen, for this reference and continuing discussion).
⁵ Halman 2001, 44.
States had revealed very different types of individualism, in particular utilitarian individualism, aiming at maximizing one’s individual material benefits, and expressive individualism, oriented towards demonstrating one’s otherness to others. Follow-up research in Europe even led to the suggestion to differentiate between sub-systems of different degrees of de-traditionalisation.

Differentiating between different types of and factors in individualism of course involves problems in historically comparing different periods of individualisation. Following a German historiographic and philosophical tradition of Ranke, Windelband or Rickert, I need not reject individualisation in favour of generalisation regarding historical data. Yet problems besides defining a common scale remain. Social action and discourse need not go hand in hand. Valuing individuality, that is, differences between individuals, indicates one side. De-traditionalized action indicates another one. Deviant action could be reflected in polemics or legal documents of the dominant groups and institutions, and is thus a sure indicator of individual differences, but legal individualism, the institutional stress on individual rights, might make it much harder to identify individual differences in the sources. At the same time, such a recognition and support of individualism in the realm of legislation creates a veritable type of individualism; state support of individualisation could hardly be undervalued.

Economic security is a precondition for individuality on a large scale.

Individuality can be generalized and turned into the contents of social expectation like fashion. Self-control could be the most effective form of public disciplining. The monastic movement, the anachoresis of Egyptians monks was probably one of the most massive decisions against traditional forms of sociality in the Roman Empire. Within a short period, however, rules for the koinobits proliferated. With regard to specific forms individualisation easily appears as a dialectical process, establishing new norms, generalising behaviour. “Individualisation” as a concept of historical research is not “progress” in disguise. Institutionalisation is gain and loss at the same time. This paradox is dissolved only, if individualism is not regarded as a concept and social orientation opposed to society, not as an alternative to the anthropological trait of a zoon politikon, but if treated as an option within society.

Dobbelaere 2001, 58.
See Halman 2001, 29, on the role of the modern welfare state.
Cf. Borsche 19??, 316; underlined by Dietmar Mieth in a communication at the Max Weber centre.
2 **Clarifying concepts: individua, individuality, individuation**

The last remarks remind of the importance of clarifying the terms which have been used so far. Such a reflexion is not an abstract, but a contextualised exercise. The terminology used is relating research thus organized to previous research as to the languages of the cultures analysed.

It was M. Tullius Cicero in his accounts and discussions of Greek philosophical positions, who coined the term *individua* as a translation of the Greek *átoma*.\(^{12}\) In his paraphrase of the Platonic *Timaios*, Cicero employed the term to distinguish between the indivisible and divisible matter used by the creator god to form the human soul (*animus*).\(^{13}\) Seneca could use the term for indivisible material connections as indivisible goods like peace and liberty.\(^{14}\) By the end of the first century AD the term could be used for very strong bonds of friendship or love.\(^{15}\) Within the philosophical discussion the ontological discussion about the priority of the individuals as first substances (Aristotle) or a priority of the generalities (Plotinos) remained dominant, leading to an understanding of individuals as clearly, demonstrably separate beings, easily illustrated by human individuals, but never restricted to human and superhuman rational beings.\(^{16}\) As far as I can see, neither the problems of the growth of individuality by developments in time and space (individuation) nor the problem of the communication between separated individuals\(^ {17}\) and hence the social dimension of the term became a matter of debate in ancient texts. Unlike the discussions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, difference did not form a central implication and hence problem of individuality in antiquity. For that period a *Begriffsgeschichte* will not lead to substantial results.

The brief historical sketch suggests a statement on the relationships between some terms stemming from “individual”. Here, I follow Albert Musschenga in his introduction to the co-edited book on “The many faces of individualism”:

“I distinguish between *individualisation* as an objective process of social change, *individuation* as development of personal identity, *values of individuality* which express views on personal identity that emerge in the process of individualisation and are used to legitimise

\(^{12}\) Kobusch 1976, 300; e.g. Cic. *fin.* 1.17; *ND* 1.71.

\(^{13}\) Cic. *Tim.* 21.

\(^{14}\) Sen. *dial.* 1.5.9; *epist.* 73.8.

\(^{15}\) Tac. *ann.* 6.10; Apul. *Apol.* 53; *CIL* 8.22672.

\(^{16}\) Kobusch 19??, 301-3.

\(^{17}\) See Borsche 19??, 310-322 for the modern development of the term.
that process, and *individualist doctrines* in which (some of) these values are linked up to certain conceptions of man and of society.\(^{18}\)

“Individual” has not been part of this definition. As an historical term, it is neither descriptively nor analytically helpful. In an ontological sense, it is an anthropological generality, used for differentiation only in the debate on early developmental stages of the foetus. Thus, differences must be formulated within concepts of individuality that are able to speak about different degrees and types of individuality achieved by different persons in processes of individuation. Musschenga’s further specifications (starting with the term “personal identity”) are addressing contemporary “modern society”. They are not adequate for historical research. Thus, I will try to flesh out the notions of individuation and individuality before turning to individualisation.

Individuation is inseparably bound up with socialisation. How does a human being become a full member of society? And how does she or he become an individually acting adult? Both these questions refer to the same process, of course with many different possibilities to stress social functionality and personal autonomy, to offer two poles and potentially highly laden terms. To describe the desirable outcome of the process is to make a normative statement.

Within the societies of the ancient Mediterranean, this process is full of variables. Already primary socialisation in the elementary social group of the family is subject to many complications. Basically, one has to learn biographically changing roles of, e.g., son or older sister, wife or *pater familias*. But families were not stable, mortality in birth and childbed was high, military conflict endemic in the Mediterranean basin, resulting in death or slavery of the individual.\(^{19}\) Processes of urbanisation increased social as local mobility, migration was frequent. Secondary socialisation, i.e. by specialised agents and institutions, probably was restricted to a minority of affluent people, nearly exclusively to male members of such groups. Here, a literacy that went beyond the ability to write one’s name or to read a short inscription\(^{20}\) was taught. For members of local elites who were not Greek or Latin by origin, bilingualism might have been widely present. In sum, many potentials of de-traditionalisation were present.

It is difficult to make generalising statements about a large area of different cultures and polities. For late republican Rome, a pervasive orientation towards upward mobility has been stated.\(^{21}\) As families might easily die out, and as municipal Italian elites streamed into the

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19 See now Eckstein 2008 for the latter; ancient demographics: Scheidel 2007.
20 See Harris 1989 and Beard … for the discussion.
21 See Barton 2001, 272-6.
metropolis or tried to compete with Rome in townships like Tibur or Praeneste, social status was far from secure. Conflicts of different traditions and roles must have been frequent, role distance rather than purely traditional orientation endemic.\textsuperscript{22} “Many of the most compelling stories explored or exploited the disjunctions between emotional life and the codes governing behaviour”, a recent inquiry into the Roman notion of honour observed, postulating a continuous experience of discomfort and anxiety.\textsuperscript{23} Within the clear framework of a political identity as Romans, one’s own stance and status had to be permanently proven and adjusted by situational success. This is far from the image of a traditional society, where individuality might be confined to the special performance of your allotted duties.\textsuperscript{24} The concept of a career made up of annual positions filled by popular election further makes the idea of “allotted duties” appear problematic. Expectations from family and personal background, presenting oneself in an electoral campaign and defeat at the ballot must have produced status dissonance in a large number of those individuals that are most prominent in our limited sources, even if a sequence of different roles was not seen as problematical as such, as Cicero attests.

A look into individuation, hence, must pay attention to the balance of traditions and expectations and opportunities of being special, being different. However, being different was not a “value of individuality” informing individuation. Values of individuality are dependent on an audience (or more modern: observer). Dignity and honour were such values, hardly transferable between different persons, even if related to and determined within family and social background, acclaimed for legitimising purposes, but easily contested and without guarantee of success during your lifetime. \textit{Memoria dignus}, worth of memory, would prolong this beyond the space of one’s proper life, demanding a much higher degree of being remarkable, excellent, different. Again, difference within acceptable degrees and upon agreed fields of competition: Euergetic engagement, that is generosity, display of a cultured taste (referring to an always changing mix of Greek as local standards), literary and art production. Not all standards were shared by many. Individual rationality was of growing importance and a source of success during the late republic, but it was always contested.\textsuperscript{25} Finally, standards could be shared by an (imagined) trans-local instead of the local community. Then, criticism, polemic against deviancy, persecution might ensue.

It must be stressed, again, that individuality and sociality, individuation and socialisation, are always bound together. For a detailed analysis the use of the originally (and for many still)

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 272.
\textsuperscript{24} Thus Musschenga 2001, 8, following Luhmann 1989.
\textsuperscript{25} Rüpke (forthcoming); see Dumont 1986, 28.
polemic term "individualism" is misleading. Following Ernst Troeltsch, Louis Dumont's historical sketch of the phenomenon concentrated on the opposition of otherworldly and inworldly orientation and its many possible combinations. But such a look into preconditions and irrelevancies for salvation, into church and empire creates perspectives too narrow to catch the many facets of individuality, creates an unnecessarily dualistic image of the phenomena under scrutiny, even if it focuses interest on the role of religion, to which we must turn later.

3 Self and person

So far, I have concentrated on the relationship of individuals and society. What about the relationship of the individual to herself or himself (by using such clumsy formulation I try to keep the factor gender in mind)? As already mentioned above, this relationship is of central importance for the identification of forms and values of individuality. Terminologically this is best phrased as "self". The notions of autòs and ipse were present in ancient philosophical discourse starting from Platonic dialogues. Michael Trapp has recently presented a detailed analysis of the Hellenistic and Imperial thinking about self, person, and individual, some results of which could be briefly summarized.

On first sight, the evidence is quite differentiated. Contributions to a theory of the self stem from physical thinking about the soul which clearly is identified as the more important part, reigning the body and connecting the human with the divine, in particular in the best (and hence leading) part of the soul. The real self tends to be identified with the divine intellect, ultimately separated from the bodily and emotional parts. The second line of reflection is even more central to the essentially ethical concern of all philosophical schools of the time, i.e., the question of how to live a good life. Self-analysis, basically driven by a sense of self-preservation, is necessitated by the Stoic concept of oikeiôsis. Everybody has to find out and adapt to his physical and social nature, consciously grasp his or her constitution in steps from the basic physical facts to the position within the divinely ordered cosmos. The same self-analysis is necessitated by the "duties" (officia) one has to fulfil against oneself and the society. In all these instances, however, it is not individuality in the sense of individual differences that is sought after. The way of living and one's duties vary according to one's

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26 Dumont 1986, 26-59.
28 Ibid., 99-109.
29 Ibid., 109-114.
belonging to typical classes of sex, age, juridical and social status. As part of the divine intellect – of course we have to except the Epicureans here – the highest aim and capacity of the human soul and (or) mind is participating in rational thinking and its impersonal standards. It is deficits and illnesses of the human body and mind that constitute individual variants. In long therapeutic practices they have to be carefully identified and cared for, whether in healing cults or philosophical activity, and – ultimately – removed. It should be pointed out that a theory of roles (personae) is not brought to bear on these discussions. In a parallel manner, the argument from life and character of a person (de vita) is not very articulated in the rhetorical system (as part of the invention) and training for advocacy.

These findings are important for the terminological clarification of the inquiry. Positively, they invite the usage of the term "self" in matters ancient in a psychologically descriptive way as the empirical view of a person of itself, typically including the notion of moral responsibility. Negatively, it must be stressed that the term "self" should not include the notion of individuality. A large range of problems of modern thinking about the self seemed to have been touched upon, but they cannot be supposed to constitute permanent aspects of an ongoing discussion. For a history of individualisation, the textual presence of the notion of the self is not sufficient.

Huge differences between modern and ancient terminological use can be stated for another term, just employed, namely "person". Important for ancient grammar as Christology, the term, even if primarily denoting a role (in theatre, court, administration), was neither used for an elaborate role theory nor discussions about the attribution of responsibility or holders of right. Without any pregnancy is used for persons acting and subject to the law. Only in very late (Western) antiquity Boethius coined his famous definition persona est naturae rationabilis individual substantia ("person is the individual substance of a rational nature") that connected person to the notion of individual. Hence, I suggest using that term instead of a casual "individual" in order to denote human beings.

30 Ibid., 115 f.
31 Ibid., 109.
32 Ibid., 116-122.
33 Ibid., 120.
34 See Rhetorica ad Herennium 2.5.
35 Thus Schönpflug's definition of the modern psychological usage of the term (1995, 305).
36 As in Cox Miller 2005.
37 Cf. Markschies 1987a for the lack of the notion "interior man".
38 Boethius, Contra Eutychen et Nestorium 1-3; see Fuhrmann 1989.
4 Religious individualisation

So far, neither the term nor the restriction to religion has been addressed. Some preliminary remarks are necessary. For the period under consideration I – and I guess, I might say we – do not presuppose that religion is of special importance for individuation and potentially individualisation. Of course, one could point to the fact that probably the largest part of ancient evidence on religious action, that is dedicatory inscriptions and votives, mostly stemmed from religious action of single persons. However, that might have been the result of totally traditional, group informed behaviour. As I am interested in the religious factor, I need a circumscription of the object of research that is independent from my interest in individualisation. Thus, I opt for a substantialist definition, analysing as religion such actions, concepts, and related objects and institutions that deal with superhuman, not necessarily transcendental powers called "gods". If, on such a basis, the empirical importance of religion for individualisation can be proved or conceptual links identified, the better it is. Formally, hence, the decision to look for individualisation in the medium of religion is decisionistic for antiquity.

Of course, such decisions have a place in actual research apart from the general interest of the research topic of "religious individualisation in historical perspective". Stressing the role of single persons clashes with the concept of "polis religion" or civil religion, that assumes the priority of the political unit in defining the material contents and functions of local polytheistic systems. The analyses of ancient polytheistic religions, whether they refer to "embedded" religion or "polis religion", work on the assumption that all members of ancient societies were in principle equally religious. From this perspective, religion (and this applies to Judaism as well) is a taken-for-granted part of every biography: rites de passage structure the life of each individual, while ritual acts within the domestic cult, family cult or burial and death rites facilitate change of status. This basic assumption of a homo religiosus is bound up with a political interpretation of ancient religion: as religion is an unquestioned given and individuals might at most occupy marginal intellectual, critical or even atheistic positions, religion is thought to be particularly well-suited to cultivating “collective identities” and instrumentalizing them, up to and including the securing of power. An example is the claim,

39 For the problems of defining religion for ancient societies see Rüpke 2007 (RelRom), 5-8.
40 This holds not true for later periods. For Simmel, for example, following contemporaneous ideas like "Kulturprotestantismus", the religious factor in the constitution of the individual, i.e. individuation, was decisive (Krech 1998, 201-3; Schramm 2006).
41 See e.g. de Polignac 1995a, b; Dondin-Payre, Raepsaet-Charlier 2006 with the critique of R. Häussler 2008.
which has now been disproved historically,\textsuperscript{42} that only citizens were entitled to take part in the rituals of the \textit{polis}. Here, the religious actions of individuals take place solely in those niches and predefined spaces permitted by the civic religion which in turn is created and financed by the leading social classes. On this view, only Christianity offered a fundamental alternative. In any event, with its emphasis on individual promises of salvation and on faith rather than ritual practices, it marked a rupture with the form of ancient religions outlined here.

In contemporary research, Christianity emerges only gradually as an ancient religion.\textsuperscript{43} The same holds true of Judaism as well as Manichaeism. The manifold links and large overlaps of these "isms" with the background and ongoing development of ancient (and late antique) religion is only insufficiently reflected. Here, the option for the individual as a research strategy finds a second adversary, namely a history of religion in antiquity that is told as the struggle between different cults or religions – Iuppiter or Isis, Mithras or Christ. This is not only problematical as far as the status of these units of the narrative is concerned. Conceptualising all instances of the veneration of Isis as a coherent religion or "cult" is as problematical as postulating the coherence of an actor "Christianity".\textsuperscript{44} Focusing on the problem of individuation and individualisation will not solve, but contribute to this major task.\textsuperscript{45}

As could be deducted from these remarks, religious individualisation is an ambiguous term. On the one hand, it could refer to the role of religion in individuation. Ancient religions offered ritual forms thematising single persons' problems of status or health, they offered support for a variety of existing social bonds and alternatives, they offered concepts and generic forms to reflect about one's self. In many cases, these institutions were part of the primary and secondary socialisation. Consequently, one could ask about the degree of de-traditionalisation and of becoming different involved in these processes and offered by these forms. On the other hand, one could ask about the role of individuality in the shape of religions. Do religious institutions, that is, organisations, rituals, texts, beliefs, accommodate, value or favour individuality? If this is the case, and effects could be observed in the role of religion in an individuation that values individuality – and I should like to stress both conditions -, one could speak of religious individualisation. This would not be a statement about religion in general, but about a specific historical, a temporal and spatial constellation, a

\textsuperscript{42} Krauter 2004, 142 for Rome.
\textsuperscript{43} See J.Z. Smith' stress on the "locative" character of most strands of early Christianity (1990 [Drudg.div.]).
\textsuperscript{44} See the contributions in Cancik, Rüpke 2009.
\textsuperscript{45} See Rüpke 2004 and 2009a (forthcoming).
development that might leave permanent traits – in texts, in institutions, in historical memory -, but is subject to change and easily open to processes of de-individualisation.

I have stressed the notion of different types of individualism and the problem of divergent traits of individualism in different areas of society earlier. Thus it seems plausible to speak of religious individualisation as just done. However, if religions are accorded a history, it is hardly a history of their own. Persons in their processes of individuation are as much subject to interaction with society at large as are religions. Religious individualisation, then, could not be totally independent from other processes of individualisation (or de-individualisation). That does not exclude that it might lead or lag behind. For a meaningful discussion on religious individualisation it will not suffice to point to an elaborate concept of self in a religious text or the idiosyncratic arrangement of a tomb. But of course, these are the first steps in an empirical inquiry in the topic. As elsewhere, for the history of ancient religions the availability of sources limiting our answers, but it must not dictate our questions.

5 A heuristic of religious individuation

In order to deal with the complexity of our problem, I propose to start from the process of individuation and the opportunities offered by religions for increasing individual difference and the space of action not defined by traditions, always keeping in mind, that the individual acquisition of religion and the reproduction and reproductive change of religion are mutually interdependent. This has to be set in the context of a society with a view on the changes and the beyond of this society. The model to describe and analyze these processes that I am proposing here is rather simple in its implicit equation of tradition and the status quo of that society. This is admittedly a defective, but perhaps acceptable account of the basic stability of ancient societies.

[insert graph]

My model is presented in graphic form. I start in the centre of it, the individual member of an ancient society of the Hellenistic or Roman period. Above all I thought about the late Roman republic and the empire, but tried to keep it able to be generalised. The person's individuation is informed by different factors, gender above all, then economic and social factors, like legal status (freeborn or slave, libertine origin), wealth, space (town or countryside – most of our textual evidence stems from urban zones) and mobility, social status, like being member of the local elite, finally cultural factors like the name system, education or current practices of
self-representation. Of course, the, probably very variable, exposure to the phenomena of all the following areas is of importance for any specific religious individuation.

I tried to divide the spectrum of religion related activities in eight segments, sometimes easier, sometimes more difficult to separate. Roughly, the spectre refers to social action on the right side and to reflexion on the left side. This corresponds to more intense interaction in society and the problem of conflicts and even legal persecution by the society on the one hand, and a potentially universal space of communication on the other. Evidently, Greek, to a lesser degree even Latin, texts could be read throughout the Mediterranean basin by the literate echelons of Hellenistic and even more imperial society. It was a particular attraction of the type of rationality offered by Greek philosophy and rhetoric that it claimed universal validity beyond traditional hierarchies and social status.  

"Beyond society", however, transcends the human realm as is indicated by direct communication with the divine outside of public rituals and the services of public priests.

1 Using choices
The rise of religious options has been described as one of the major characteristics of the Hellenistic and imperial period up to the point of comparison with modern religious pluralism. This was primarily due to the mobility of merchants, administrators, soldiers, slaves. For an urban centre like Rome the rate of permanent immigration and hence frequently preservation of religious tradition instead of new choice should not be underrated. Ramsay McMullen has pointed to the phenomenon of diaspora as an indicator of the traditional character of religious adherence. At the same time, however, fast processes of acculturation are visible.

A competence to select deities according to situational specifics is fundamental for the Mediterranean type of polytheism. However, only the proliferation of cults that generate religious groups popularised concepts of exclusivity. This "Sozialproduktivität" of cults is a rather new feature of imperial developments. This said, it must be stressed that the density

46 See Rüpke, Cultural change and rationality, forthcoming.
47 The term "elective cults", although attractive, has been introduced by Beard, North, Price 1998 as complementary to the traditional patterns of civic religion, an association, that I try to avoid.
49 Briefly Rüpke 2007a.
50 For immigration to Rome even in late antiquity see Purcell 1999; Noy 2000a; for the religion of immigrants to Hellenistic Athens Mikalson 1998; to Rome: Noy 2000.
51 See e.g. Steuernagel 2001, 2001a; Rüpke 2006a; Ertel, Freyberger, von Hesberg 2008.
of the communities thus created, the degree and range of exclusivity have been grossly overvalued. Here is much work to be done.

2 Creating choices

Within an approach focusing on individualisation as a societal phenomenon, I am not proposing to return to the studying of founding figures. Within the framework of an additive polytheistic system that is open to extension\(^{53}\) the introduction of new gods and options of venerations into local temples (by setting up votives to gods not previously venerated) or "panthea" (by introducing new cults into a locality) was frequent and frequently subject to individual whimsy that merits further research for Greek sanctuaries as republican Roman temples.\(^{54}\) It might turn out that the most important set of religious symbols was a fortuitous result of different persons’ individual decisions.

3 Creating norms

Donating a new sanctuary was a complex matter, not restricted to the establishment of a new god. Selection of the place, choice of architectural details, regulation of rituals (often hardly visible for us), all of this involved many decisions that would relate to existing traditions, interpret and – as benchmarks in a competitive society – create new norms. Henner von Hesberg, who, unfortunately, cannot be present on this occasion, has demonstrated this for republican temple architecture.\(^{55}\)

Normative statements in this sense could be made in the form of tomb monuments, too. I am thinking of the tomb of Eurysaces, the Roman baker and contractor. Being situated close to a aqueduct, that had later been transformed into a city gate, the site is even more exceptional today than in Augustan time. Striving for originality, the tomb is representative rather than exceptional in giving expression to a world view that is dominated by Eurysaces’ own professional experiences and horizon.\(^{56}\) In a number of such monuments and even in a religious text like the "Shepherd of Hermas",\(^ {57}\) it is everyday life that is given ultimate value. On a societal level, that did not successfully question the dominance of a rather aristocratic system of values, but it indicates an individual re-evaluation of everyday life that reminds us

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\(^{53}\) See Bendlin 1997.
\(^{54}\) See the contribution by Hupfloher; for Rome briefly Rüpke 1990, 260-2; Orlin 1997. – It might be interesting to compare the extreme productivity of Christological metaphors to this process (see Wallraff 2003).
\(^{56}\) Petersen 2003.
\(^{57}\) Thus Rüpke 1999.
of the importance given by Charles Taylor to the valuing of everyday life in modern civilisation.\textsuperscript{58}

4 Privatisation

Privatisation of religion is one of the central diagnosis of modernity.\textsuperscript{59} For Hellenistic and Roman antiquity with its tradition of domestic cult, I would like to focus on two indicators of detraditionalisation. The first concerns domestic rituals that seemed to be mimetic representations of public cult. Kim Bowes (who had to abstain from participation for reasons of the final stage of pregnancy) has shown the extent of such ritual practices in late antiquity and the conflicts with ecclesiastical institutions caused by them.\textsuperscript{60} Here, late antiquity is a good case for the complexity of the developments, indicators of growing individuality are contemporaneous with growing centralisation and standardisation, producing clashes as the Priscillianist controversy or the ban on a wide range of private ritual practices in the Codes Theodosianus\textsuperscript{61} show.

The establishment of private ritual space is part of that conflict, too.\textsuperscript{62} But we need not wait for late antiquity to observe this phenomenon. Spectacular sanctuaries could be part of the entrance situation of an urban house as part of the large gardens of a suburban \textit{villa} as has been shown for the Casa dei Vettii at Pompeji\textsuperscript{63} as for an idyllic landscape on board of the Tiber, that included a circular sanctuary for Hercules, right in the centre of Rome.\textsuperscript{64}

5 Communication with the divine

Personal communication with gods was never restricted to public rituals or temples. Votives probably resulting from personal concerns are widely attested from the archaic period onwards.\textsuperscript{65} Forms and intensity, however, are changing and might be related to a growing concern about one's family and oneself. The rise of the cult of Asclepios could be such an indicator,\textsuperscript{66} as healing and the social topography of healing imply statements about the

\textsuperscript{58} Taylor1994, 14.
\textsuperscript{59} Luckmann 1967.
\textsuperscript{60} Bowes 2005, 198; Bowes 2008.
\textsuperscript{61} Collected in \textit{CTh} 9.16.
\textsuperscript{62} Bowes 2005, 199.
\textsuperscript{63} Kastenmeier 2001.
\textsuperscript{64} von Hesberg 2005.
\textsuperscript{65} E.g. Bouma 1996.
\textsuperscript{66} Graf 1997, 96; more general: Gordon 1995.
relationship between a person and society;\textsuperscript{67} Aelius Aristides' Hieroi Logoi are one of the most important testimonies of religious individuality from antiquity.\textsuperscript{68}

Two other relevant forms of communication must be mentioned. Divination is the first. The imperial reinvigoration and proliferation of oracles\textsuperscript{69} is an interesting area of research for the individualisation of institutions. Astrology as a mass phenomena of the personalisation of temporal orders would be another one.\textsuperscript{70} It is referring a person to a universal natural order that is made compatible with specific, e.g. Jewish or Christian cosmologies at the same time.\textsuperscript{71}

For late antiquity, theurgy offered another way of efficacious personal contact.\textsuperscript{72}

The vast array of practices called "magic" is the other area. Apart from individual concerns about health, the attempt to counter results that were to be expected on the basis of social status in social relations or legal conflicts is obvious. In the highly risky area of relationships of and with prostitutes the lack of traditional regulations is replaced by magic.\textsuperscript{73}

6   Religious experience

Despite the centrality of experience in the thinking about religion since the end of the eighteenth century, "experience" has not been brought to bear on ancient religion outside Judaism and Christianity despite some recent book titles.\textsuperscript{74} The very subjectivity of "experience" (pathos,\textsuperscript{75} unlike the ancient notion of experientia, that is, learning from practising) seems to conflict with the dearth of ancient sources. However, recent analyses of the phenomena have produced a concept of experience that is taking into account the connection between personal experience and communicated meaning and opens perspective for a historical use of the concept. I quote Matthias Jung, fellow of our research group: "personal, lived experience in its qualitative-emotional dimension remains dumb and has no power to transform behaviour as long as it is not articulated symbolically and … any system of convictions and practices, that from the first-person-point of view is no longer seen as expressive for qualitative experience, becomes increasingly obsolete."\textsuperscript{76} “Experience”, thus, could stress the observer and user of images, sacred space, and movement towards and in

\textsuperscript{67} See McGuire 1988, 240-257; Rüpke 1995.

\textsuperscript{68} Behr 1986; Harris, Holmes 2009; Petsalis-Diomidis 2009 (forthcoming OUP).

\textsuperscript{69} Bendlin 2006; Belayche, Rüpke 2007; cf. Rosenberger 2001, Bowden 2005 for the classical period of Greece.

\textsuperscript{70} Rüpke 1995, 587-592; Rüpke 2006b, 182-7.

\textsuperscript{71} von Stuckrad 2000.

\textsuperscript{72} Janowitz 2002; Athanassiadi 1993.

\textsuperscript{73} Gordon 1987; Gordon 1999; Gordon 2009 (forthcoming).

\textsuperscript{74} Bispham, Smith 2000; Cole 2004. “Emotionality” has gained more attention, but needs not be related to individuality: Linke 2003, 84.

\textsuperscript{75} Troles Engberg-Pedersen presented on the Boston SBL conference in 2008 an attempt to define and identify religious experiences in ancient texts by this term.

\textsuperscript{76} Jung 2006, 21; see also Jung 2004 and Schlette, Jung 2005, in particular Jung 2005.
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sacred space, that is, pilgrimage.\textsuperscript{77} The latter established a tradition to temporarily drop out of society.\textsuperscript{78}

For the use of images I would like to point to observations regarding the presentation of cult images in temples that point to a stress on a lively and overwhelming appearance in a rather intimate space\textsuperscript{79} in Hellenistic Italy. For the imperial period (already Augustan times?) Heron of Alexandria describes a wide range of instruments and mechanism to create emotionally intensive and surprising confrontation with the image.\textsuperscript{80} Architectural arrangements are hardly separable. Spectacular encounters are not restricted to exotic deities (as exemplified by the ground plan and furnishing of the so-called sanctuary of Syrian deities on the slopes of the Janiculum at Rome\textsuperscript{81}) but attain to regular temples, too.\textsuperscript{82}

7 Caring for the self
Caring for the self, \textit{le souci de soi}, of course, is a classical \textit{topos} of individuation and individuality. Religion is central, but is subject to historical developments. I agree with Guy Stroumsa that "identity, which in the Hellenistic world had been defined … in cultural and linguistic terms, became essentially religious in the Roman Empire."\textsuperscript{83} Within the structure of my descriptive model I position reflexions of various degrees of explicit concepts of the self rather than interests in healing (cf. 5) here. Auto-biography and - as far as it is displaying interest in other persons as potential role models or references for self-reflection\textsuperscript{84} – biography might entirely replace the need for such concepts of the self by narrative coherence.\textsuperscript{85} Conversion narratives and accounts of sin and purification are narrative or interpretive contexts that produce explicit reflexions.\textsuperscript{86} I regard this as a strategy to identify sources rather than attributing too much value on the phenomenon of biographical rupture as a necessary indicator of intensified individuation.

Interest in oneself could take the form of interest in one's postmortal fate. That might take the form of speculations on a postmortal continuation of a soul and its divinisation\textsuperscript{87}. However,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{77} For the latter see e.g. Petsalis-Diomidis 2005.
\item \textsuperscript{78} See Hunt 1984; Büttner et al. 1985; Dunand 1997.
\item \textsuperscript{79} von Hesberg 2007, 454-6.
\item \textsuperscript{80} I am grateful to Mihaela Holban, Erfurt, for the reference.
\item \textsuperscript{81} L.Godart; see also Scheid 1995 (Gaionas).
\item \textsuperscript{82} E.g. the image of Fortuna huiusce diei.
\item \textsuperscript{83} Stroumsa 2005 (in Brakke et al. 2005), 184.
\item \textsuperscript{84} I am referring to Ian Henderson's (Montréal) interpretation of the Gospel of Mark within the research group (29th April, 2009).
\item \textsuperscript{85} E.g. McGing, Mossman 2006; see Momigliano 1987f (anc. biogr.) pleading for biographical approaches to ancient religion.
\item \textsuperscript{86} See Assmann, Stroumsa 1999.
\item \textsuperscript{87} E.g. Brenk 1998, 180f. For Greece see Vernant 1996.
\end{itemize}
neither need concepts of the self in form of a (or occasionally two\textsuperscript{88}) soul the notion of a continuing existence\textsuperscript{39} nor is care for the postmortal phase bound to the notion of the soul. In many cases, stress is laid on the continuing social presence, on \textit{memoria}, ensured, however, by one's family (in the larger sense of household rather than kinship) or professional colleagues. Here, again, developments and regional differences might be interesting. The specific Roman emphasis on a familial context is not matched everywhere.\textsuperscript{90}

8  

**Employing rationality**

The spread of rational argumentation that I tried to map in detail for the late Roman republic,\textsuperscript{91} could be used as a resource of de-traditionalisation by anybody. Rhetoric was a learnable technique (and as such opposed by the Roman elite even at the beginning of the first century BC) and (in difference to philosophy) intended for performance.\textsuperscript{92} It was useful for universalising one's argumentation beyond the traditional problems of a local society. At the same time it continued to clash with established hierarchies and authorities and found its place in the law courts rather than in the bodies of political decision-making. Of course, chronology and group-specific developments must be taken into account. Undeniably, there is an anti-intellectual current in fourth-century Christian thinkers.\textsuperscript{93} The clash of rationality and spirituality is not an invention of postmodernity.

6  

**Conclusion**

The terminology and model presented do not offer a theory of individualisation or a chart-flow diagram for historical phases of individualisation. Rather, I tried to identify important areas of intensification of individual differences and individuality as being developed within the necessary process of individuation of very person. It is a map of areas of research and the parallel use of different diverse parameters that I suggest as being fruitful for a historicization

\textsuperscript{88} Stroumsa 1999, 282-291 on Manichean soul concepts influenced by Iranian traditions.
\textsuperscript{89} See above, p. 5 and 8.
\textsuperscript{90} von Hesberg 2005\textsuperscript{a}. The domestic presence of mummies in Roman Egypt would be an interesting case for comparison (see Wortley 2006).
\textsuperscript{91} Rüpke, Rationalisation and religious change in republican Rome (forthcoming).
\textsuperscript{92} Trapp 2007, 235.
\textsuperscript{93} Stroumsa 2005, 191.
The sheer complexity of the map points to the difficulties to interpret isolated findings as indicators of some process of individualisation. Of course, interdependencies of some of the areas analytically separated and the correlation with larger intellectual, political and social processes indicated as a frame to the individuation chart will point to historical periods of intensification of individualisation – or the contrary – that must be evaluated against findings in other periods of European or extra-European history. In any case, research on the suggested lines, methodologically starting from the individual, will help to better understand the complexity and dynamics of the ancient history of religion in the Hellenistic and Roman period.

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94 I am grateful for the discussion with Paul Lichterman (Los Angeles), fellow of the research group in 2009, and his insistence of separating the conglomeration of notions tied to religious individualization and religion in modernity.
Rüpke, Jörg 1990. *Dom militiae*  