

Author biographies

Dr Michael Rush

Mike Rush obtained his PhD at Christ Church Canterbury University, supported by the Alef Trust and the Professional Development Foundation. He is also Trustee of the Alister Hardy Society and sits on the committee of the BPS Transpersonal Psychology Section. He provides support, training, and undertakes research into spiritual crisis (aka spiritual emergency) and co-facilitates peer-support groups, trained as a Spiritual Emergence Coach with the IMHU. He was co-director of the UK Spiritual Crisis Network for ten years. Further, he is a qualified hypno-psychotherapist registered with the CNHC and the National Society of Talking Therapies. Although he has not experienced a spiritual crisis himself, he has a long-standing interest in myth, magic, and mysticism, viewed through the lenses of applied and transpersonal psychology, and in particular with spiritual crisis, Western Esotericism, and the pre-Christian traditions of the British Isles.

Dr Wanting He

Wanting He received her PhD from Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University in Bangkok. Her research focuses on digital culture, artificial intelligence and society, mediated intimacy, and the intersection of religion, spirituality, and digital media. She is particularly interested in how emerging media technologies reshape cultural practices, emotional experience, and everyday forms of meaning-making. Her work draws on both quantitative and qualitative approaches, including digital ethnography, experimental research, and computationally assisted methods.

Dr Dimitrios Th. Vachaviolos

Dimitrios Vachaviolos holds a PhD in Byzantine History from the University of Ioannina, Greece (2014). He is currently a Laboratory Teaching Staff member in Byzantine History and Culture at the Department of History, Archaeology and Cultural Resources Management of the University of Peloponnese. In October 2024, he was appointed President of the Supervisory Council of the Public Central Library of Sparta. His research interests focus on the ecclesiastical history, geography, and art of the Peloponnese during the Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods, Byzantine hagiography, as well as ecclesiastical-political developments and reunion efforts between Eastern and Western Christendom in the late Byzantine era.

Accursio Graffeo, MA

Accursio Graffeo is a PhD candidate in the Italian Doctoral School of Religious Studies (DREST) at the University of Modena-Reggio Emilia/University of Turin jointly with the University of Zurich (URPP Digital Religion(s) research centre) and at the Bruno Kessler Foundation (FBK-ISR Center for Religious Studies). His research focuses on AI-related new religious movements. He holds a master's degree in cultural anthropology from the University of Turin. In 2022 he published his first monograph entitled *'Religioni e*

complessità. L'antropologia di Enrico Comba e i Nativi nordamericani (Accademia University Press). In the social sector, he has more than a decade of experience in the field of social community empowerment in the metropolitan area of Milan and solid experience in social design and project writing. In the field of anthropology, he is a member of the editorial board of AceTónico, an online project for independent and participatory anthropological publishing.

Dr Sára Heidl

Sára Eszter Heidl is a lecturer at the University of Vienna. She completed her bachelor's degree in sociology and her master's degree in religious studies. In her PhD, she examined Hungarian festivals, exploring the event experience through theories of religious experience. This work was published in the book *Event Religion and European Festival Experience: Concepts and Case Studies* (2025). Her current interests lie in the terminological debates on religious experience, and the empirical exploration of that experience in alternative religious and spiritual circles.