

We would like to invite you to participate in our panel “The Pope: Continuity, Change and Contestation in Local and Global Spheres of Meaning” at the EASR Conference in Tartu.

This session employs the physical and symbolic relocation of the pope to reflect upon religious change and continuities in a cross-cultural perspective. Where does he go, to whom does he belong, and how is he interpreted in different webs of meaning? How does his symbolic “malleability” reflect or highlight inter- and intrareligious boundaries? The pope is a powerful leader of a global religious community of 1.3 billion people worldwide, making him an important figure both within and beyond the tradition he formally represents. The pope travels to new places, is online, and acquires new roles and functions in a range of religious and secular contexts, being cast, for example, as pilgrim, environmentalist, peacemaker or Crusader. As the pope moves, he gets global media attention and the geographical places he visits seem to be (temporarily) redefined by his (holy) presence. The pope's media presence can be construed as a continuous relocation - of the pope - but does it also mean a constant relocation of meaning, or of the centre of the Church? Our working hypothesis is that the intensified “papal mobility” over the last decades, spatially and symbolically, reflects an ongoing relocation of religion, related to globalisation and new forms of interconnectedness. The session is a continuation of an EASR panel in 2016. The purpose is to publish an anthology, and it is open for proposals.

<https://easr2019.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/EASR-2019-Sessions-1.pdf>

If you are interested in submitting an abstract to this open session, please do so by December 15, 2018 on the conference website, <https://easr2019.org/>.