

**Biological and Cultural Evolution and Their Interactions:
Rethinking the Darwinian and Durkheimian Legacy in the Context of the Study of Religion**

Call for papers and poster proposals

**International Conference at the Section for the Study of Religion, Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University,
26- 30 June 2012.**

2012 marks the centennial of Durkheim's *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*. The Section for the Study of Religion at Aarhus University will be celebrating the centennial by revitalizing one prominent aspect of Durkheim's work, i.e., the evolutionary question.

Cultural evolutionary thinking had its heyday from 1870-1920, and for various reasons, a deep skepticism of biological and cultural evolutionary thinking became entrenched in the humanities. It not only turned its back on evolutionary perspectives but also on science in general. Broader questions pertaining to human biology and cultural evolution were largely dismissed with a few notable exceptions such as Robert Bellah, Shmuel Eisenstadt and Jan Assmann.

The aim of the present conference is to revisit evolutionary questions with a special focus on the study of religion. We think that progress in the field of cognitive science may enable us to once again raise a number of classic evolutionary questions in a fashion which avoids the pitfalls of the ideologically loaded presumptions of Western and Christian superiority of former days. New insights in cognitive science and evolutionary psychology have provided new opportunities for merging biological and cultural evolutionary perspectives. This combination gives us the unique possibility of once again understanding humans from the Durkheimian perspective of *homo duplex*, i.e., both natural and cultural beings. In order to examine the possibilities for revitalizing evolutionary questions in biology and culture and their interactions in the context of the study of religion, we have invited a number of prominent scholars with an interest in evolutionary questions. Keynote lectures will be given by: Robert Bellah, Pascal Boyer, Jan Bremmer, Joseph Bulbulia, Merlin Donald, Eva Jablonka, Russel Gray, Bernhard Lang, Alexandra Maryanski, Doron Mendels, Guy Stroumsa and Jonathan Turner.

The conference is hosted by the Section for the Study of Religion, the Laboratory on Theories of Religion and the Religion, Cognition and Culture Research Unit (RCC) at Aarhus University, and the Aarhus University Research Foundation. The International Association for the Cognitive Science of Religion (IACSR) will also be hosting its workshop in connection with the conference.

Proposals for papers and posters should be sent to Anders Klostergaard Petersen (akp@teo.au.dk) by **March 1, 2012**. Please send an abstract of maximum 500 words. Acceptance of papers and posters will be announced by the end of March 2012.

The deadline for registration for the conference will be April 15, 2012.
A conference homepage will be available from the beginning of January.

The conference fee will be \$200 (students and retirees \$150). Further information will be made available when the conference site is opened.

Conference organizers:
Anders Klostergaard Petersen
Hans Jørgen Lundager Jensen
Armin W. Geertz