

The research projects of the BOCHUM INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR RESEARCH IN THE HUMANITIES »Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe«, launched in April 2008 by the Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, are based on the premise that religion is not a homogeneous cultural phenomenon, but rather a dense network of diachronically and synchronically differing traditions. From this starting point, the self-perception and self-definition of religious communities can be considered the result of interreligious contact between diverse and often contradictory cultural elements which are subjected to and integrated by an amalgamating process of canonisation and dogmatisation. Focusing on the story of contacts is not only an alternative way of viewing the history of religious traditions, but a new approach to a better understanding of the social dynamics which determine the formation and expansion of religion itself.

The opening conference of the consortium will outline the main topics of its future research and provide important input for the activities in the next few years. The introductory section concerns constitutive elements in the formative phase of what shall later be termed »world religions«. By contrast, the papers of the second section concentrate on the significance of interreligious contacts during the expansive phase of the great religious traditions. The multi-perspective approach towards mutual influences leads to a methodological problem for any intercultural research, notably the lack of a general religious terminology, which will be discussed in the third section. The fourth section analyses various aspects of secularisation and (re-)sacralisation in the age of globalisation, again as an effect of multicultural contacts in a world wide web of cultural interferences. The concluding round table will summarise the different points of view arising in the preceding discussions.

Wednesday, 15 October 2008

14.00 h	Conference Reception
16.30 h	Refreshments
17.15 h	Welcome Address Tibor Kiss, Vice-Rector for Structure and Finances, Bochum, Germany
17.30 h	Introduction Volkhard Krech, Comparative Religion, Bochum, Germany
18.00 h	The Axial Age and the Rise of World Religions , Jan Assmann, Egyptology, Heidelberg, Germany
19.00 h	Dinner
20.30 h	Evening Programme: » An Audio-Visual Journey through the Parthian Age « (Script: Heinz Georg Held)

Thursday, 16 October 2008

09.00 h	SECTION I: THE FORMATION OF THE GREAT RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS THROUGH INTER-RELIGIOUS CONTACT (Chair: <i>Christian Frevel, Old Testament Studies, Bochum, Germany</i>) Religious Formations and Intercultural Contacts in Early China , Victor H. Mair, Chinese Language and Literature, Philadelphia (PA), USA <i>Response</i> , Michael Friedrich, Chinese Language and Culture, Hamburg, Germany
10.00 h	Vedic Religion, Buddhism, and Hindu Religions , Patrick Olivelle, Sanskrit and Indian Religions, Austin (TX), USA <i>Response</i> , Jens Schlieter, Religious Studies, Bern, Switzerland
11.00 h	Coffee Break
11.30 h	Judaism, Christianity, and Islam , Guy G. Stroumsa, Comparative Religion, Jerusalem, Israel <i>Response</i> , Sarah Stroumsa, Jewish Studies and Islamic Studies, Jerusalem, Israel
12.30 h	Plenary Discussion
13.15 h	Lunch
14.15 h	SECTION II: CONTACT BETWEEN THE GREAT RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS DURING THEIR EXPANSION (Chair: <i>Nikolas Jaspert, Medieval History, Bochum, Germany</i>) The First Islamic Empire: The Reaction of the Jewish World to the Rise of Islam , Michael Lecker, Arabic Language and Literature, Jerusalem, Israel <i>Response</i> , John Tolan, History, Nantes, France
15.15 h	The Jesuit Mission to China: Its Consequences for the Religious Situation in Korea and for the Political Ideas in Europe , Eun-jeung Lee, Korean Studies, Berlin, Germany <i>Response</i> , Michael Lackner, Sinology, Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany
16.15 h	Coffee Break
16.45 h	The Expansion of Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia , Stephen C. Berkwitz, Religious Studies, Springfield (MO), USA <i>Response</i> , Sven Bretfeld, Comparative Religion, Bochum, Germany
17.45 h	Plenary Discussion
18.30 h	Dinner
19.30 h	Inauguration of the Exhibition » Hellenistic Coins from the East « at Ruhr-University Kunstsammlungen organised by Peter Wick, New Testament, Bochum, Germany

Friday, 17 October 2008

09.00 h	SECTION III: THE NOTION OF RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS SEMANTICS IN A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE (Chair: <i>Lucian Hölscher, Modern History, Bochum, Germany</i>) Troubles with Pluralism: Conceptualizing Religious Diversity outside the Box , Tomoko Masuzawa, History and Comparative Literature, Ann Arbor (MI), USA <i>Response</i> , Aslam Syed, Philosophy of History, Islamabad, Pakistan
10.00 h	The Notion of Religion and its Meaning for Writing the History of Chinese Religions , Robert Ford Campany, School of Religion, Los Angeles (CA), USA <i>Response</i> , Russell T. McCutcheon, Religious Studies, Tuscaloosa (AL), USA
11.00 h	Coffee Break
11.30 h	Canon and Identity in Indian Esoteric Buddhism as the Intersection of Cultures , Ronald M. Davidson, Religious Studies, Fairfield (CT), USA <i>Response</i> , Markus Zehnder, Old Testament Studies, Kristiansand, Norway
12.30 h	Plenary Discussion
13.15 h	Lunch
14.15 h	SECTION IV: RELIGION IN THE AGE OF GLOBALISATION (Chair: <i>Marion Eggert, Korean Studies, Bochum, Germany</i>) Religion in a Globalized World , Peter Beyer, Religious Studies, Ottawa (ON), Canada <i>Response</i> , Ian Reader, Japanese Studies, Manchester, Great Britain
15.15 h	Religion, Secularization, and Sacralization , José Casanova, Sociology, Washington, DC, USA <i>Response</i> , Reinhard Schulze, Islamic Studies, Bern, Switzerland
16.15 h	Plenary Discussion
16.45 h	Coffee Break
17.15 h	ROUND TABLE: STUDYING DYNAMICS IN THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS. CONVERGENCES AND DIVERGENCES (Chair: <i>Volkhard Krech, Comparative Religion, Bochum, Germany</i>) Participants: Bettina Dennerlein (Islamic Studies, Hamburg, Germany), Peter Schalk (History of Religions, Uppsala, Sweden), Francesca Tarocco (Religions and Theology, Manchester, Great Britain), Veit Rosenberger (Ancient History, Erfurt, Germany), Boudewijn Walraven (Korean Studies, Leiden, Netherlands)
19.30 h	End of the Conference

CONFERENCE ORGANISATION

Dr. Marion Steinicke
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zwischen Asien und Europa«
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REGISTRATION

Please register in writing. Your registration will be confirmed and then becomes binding. The deadline for registration is **3 October 2008**.

DEREGISTRATION

If you are no longer able to attend at short notice, please inform us in writing by no later than **3 October 2008**, otherwise you will be charged **50%** of the attendance fee (in the case of concessions **50%** of full fee), and **100%** of the attendance fee once the conference has started.

FEES

Attendance Fee
(incl. Lunch, Dinner & Coffee Breaks during the
Conference) 140,- €

Concessions 70,- €

Please pay upon arrival at the conference information
counter.

Concessions are available for students (up to age of 30)
and unemployed upon presentation of proof.

ARRIVAL

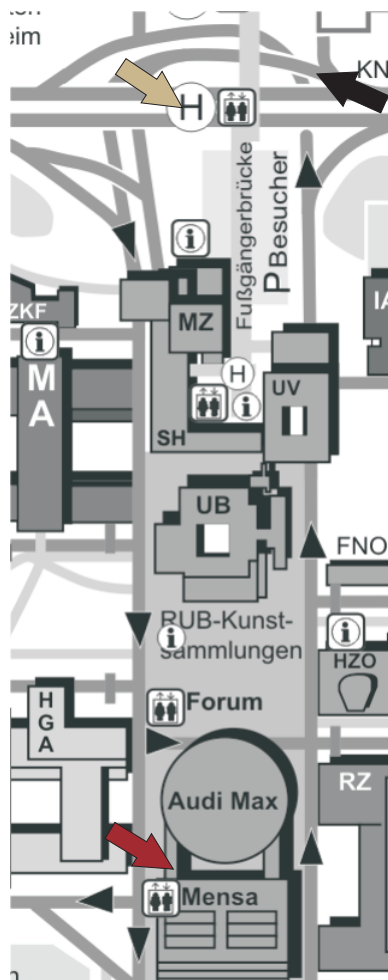
By plane or train:

From Dusseldorf Airport via, or directly from, Bochum Haupt-
bahnhof (Central Station) take the U35 towards Bochum
Querenburg (Hustadt) and get off at stop »Ruhr-Universität« (➔)
(Ticket needed: Preisstufe A).

The Veranstaltungszentrum is right behind the Audimax (➔).

By car:

Motorway A 43, interchange »Bochum-Witten«, exit at »Bochum-
Querenburg/Universität« (exit no. 19). Universitätsstraße
direction Universität/Zentrum, exit at »Uni - Mitte« (➔), about 2
km. Free parking is sign posted.



Front Page Illustration:
Coin of Vasudeva I, ca. 200 AD,
Privat Collection, Bochum
Photograph: Thorsten Koch

Conference of the International Consortium for
Research in the Humanities

DYNAMICS IN THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

between
Asia and Europe



Encounters, Notions,
and Comparative Perspectives

15 - 17 October 2008
Ruhr-University Bochum
Germany

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