



RUHR-UNIVERSITÄT BOCHUM

Guest Lecture at the Käthe Hamburger Kolleg

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## The Sacred Realms of Interfaith Relations in the Early Islamic Period

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The Pact of Umar is generally treated in modern scholarship as one of the canonical texts regulating the lives of non-Muslims under Islamic protection. While modern scholars are in agreement that the document first took shape around the ninth century, they offer different interpretations with respect to its background. The present discussion sidesteps this particular debate, seeking instead to cast light on some of the social realities behind a particular set of regulations in the Pact, namely those designed to delimit the public manifestations of non-Muslim religious practices. It is by regulating these practices and restricting them that Muslim jurists sought to reassert confessional boundaries and underscore Islam's exaltedness vis-à-vis other religions. These regulations were articulated in response to the existence of a rich matrix of interfaith relations, which pre-dated the Arab conquest and constituted a common source of concern for both Muslim and non-Muslim religious elites.