

**TRAVELING TEXTS AND TRANSFORMATIVE ENCOUNTERS**  
**Interreligious Networks between Medieval and Early Modern**  
**Asia, Africa, and Europe**

In this workshop we will examine instances of the circulation of written, oral, and visual media and material culture, between Western Europe, Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Eastern Mediterranean, Ethiopia, and South Asia as indicators of religious contact between these regions.

More significantly, we seek to examine the transformation of meanings and religious identities which resulted from the circulation of “texts” and peoples over these geographic expanses. We will focus specifically on cosmological and polemical exchanges between different Christian communities, and between Jews, Hindus, and Muslims, and as facilitated by international trade, crusading and missionizing aspirations.

For example, Ethiopian and Indian Christians drew from Western and Middle Eastern anti-Jewish polemical texts, and reshaped them to suit their own needs in a new inter-religious environment, which in the Indian case, included Hindus as well. Jewish sources from the Cairo Geniza testify to the conversion of both Western and Eastern Christians (and possibly Hindus) to Judaism, a situation that should be understood in the light of Jewish polemic against Christians in the region and to Jewish trade and settlement in India. Muslims, Western Christians, and Ethiopians alike used tales of Ethiopian control of the Nile in an effort to manipulate one another, even as Ethiopians were importing European artisans and religious iconography, Byzantine polemic, and Armenian hagiographies dealing with non-Christians.

Such clear indications of contact and exchange of religious meaningful material points to the need to study the inter-relation of these regions and the impact of such exchanges in greater detail. This workshop takes a first step in this direction.

**Monday, 14 July 2014**

**Location: FNO 01/171**

- 12:15–12:30 **Welcome and Introductory Remarks**  
*Medieval Ethiopia and Egypt at the Cross-roads of Religious and Cultural Encounter* (Chair: Adam Knobler)
- 12:30–13:30 **Analysis of Foreign and Indigenous Elements in the Ethiopian Psalter Tradition**  
Sophia Dege-Müller (Hamburg)
- 13:30–13:45 **Coffee break**
- 13:45–14:45 **Import, Repurposing and the In-Between: Objects of Western Christian Religious Material Culture in Ethiopia in the Late Middle Ages**  
Verena Krebs (Konstanz)
- 14:45–15:00 **Coffee break**
- 15:00–16:00 **Conversion and Circulation of Polemical Texts between Jews and Christians in “Medieval” Egypt and the Levant – Some Preliminary Thoughts**  
Alexandra Cuffel (Bochum)
- 16:00–17:00 **General discussion**
- 20:00 **Summer barbecue with KHK on campus**

**Tuesday, 15 July 2014**

**Location: FNO 02/40-46**

*Inter-communal Relations between Religious Communities in Medieval and Early Modern South Asia* (Chair: Alexandra Cuffel)

- 09:00–10:00 **Five Erasmian dialogues in Garshuni Malayalam: a witness to interreligious debate in early modern Kerala?**  
Istvan Perzcel (Budapest)
- 10:00–11:00 **Literary Garlands and Poetic Jewels: The Migration of Jewish and Muslim Texts from West Asia to South India**  
Ophira Gamliel (Jerusalem)
- 11:00–11:15 **Coffee break**
- 11:15–12:15 **Roundtable discussion – Prospects for the future of “Jews and Christians in the East”**  
Beate Hofmann (Bochum)
- 12:15 **Lunch at Falcone and general discussion**

**DIRECTIONS**

**Public Transportation:**

Take the U35 towards Bochum Querenburg (Hustadt) from Bochum Hauptbahnhof (Central Station) and get off at the stop »Ruhr-Universität«. From there you turn right and cross the pedestrian bridge keeping left while you pass the university library. The FNO building is on your left-hand side.

**By Car:**

The quickest route is via the motorway junction Bochum/Witten, where the A43 and A44 meet. Simply take the exit Bochum-Querenburg, follow the signs "Ruhr-Universität" and then the (electronic) information boards.



**CONVENERS**

**Prof. Dr. Alexandra Cuffel** | alexandra.cuffel@rub.de  
 Professor of Jewish Religion in Past and Present Times, Ruhr-Universität Bochum

**ORGANIZATION**

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 Käte Hamburger Kolleg, Center for Religious Studies, Ruhr University Bochum



14. Diagram: C.E.A. in Domination (ca. 1200-4), 15-17. Diaper (Henna) and St. Mary (Dobson) St. Michael (Stebels) (ca. 1400), Photo: German Library

**RUHR-UNIVERSITÄT BOCHUM**

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