

The Center for Religious Studies

The Center for Religious Studies (CERES) is one of Germany's leading institutions in the field of the scientific study of religions (German: *Religionswissenschaft*). Being part of the fifth largest German university, students and researchers alike can benefit from the vast expertise of a particularly large number of subjects. Both the independence of the center within the university structure as well as its close cooperations with various historical, socio-cultural, and philological disciplines and area studies of Ruhr-Universität Bochum and beyond ensures an in-depth and wide-ranging scientific focus on religions.



The Käte Hamburger Kolleg

The Käte Hamburger Kolleg *Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe* is the largest research project of CERES. It commenced its research activities under the direction of Prof. Dr. Volkhard Krech in April 2008. In addition to the visiting research fellows, numerous local scholars from Ruhr-Universität Bochum are involved in the institute's research programme, which brings together scholars from a wide range of academic disciplines. It's research programme focuses on the formation and expansion of religions, the mutual permeation of religious traditions and their densifications into the complex figurations called 'world religions.' Regionally, the research covers these phenomena in Europe and Asia. The academic goal is to establish and test a typology of contacts of religions and an overarching theory regarding the transfer of religions.

Directions

Public Transportation: Take the U35 CampusLinie towards *Hustadt* from the center of Bochum or Hauptbahnhof (central station) and get off at the station *Wasserstraße*. From there turn right and cross the street, then left cross the crossroads passing by the copy shop at the corner and continue for approx. 200 metres until you reach *Universitätsstraße 90a*.

By Car: The quickest route is via the motorway junction Bochum/Witten, where the autobahns A43 and A44 meet. Simply take the exit Bochum-Querenburg, follow the signs to *Bochum Zentrum* to the crossroads of *Universitätsstraße* and *Wasserstraße*. Take a u-turn left. Continue this road for approx. 200 metres, until you reach *Universitätsstraße 90a*. Parking is possible in front and behind the building.



CONVENERS

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ORGANIZATION

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Käte Hamburger Kolleg *Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe*, Center for Religious Studies, Ruhr-Universität Bochum



RUB

RUHR-UNIVERSITÄT BOCHUM

INVOKING A STRANGE GOD: RITUALS OF POWER AND RELIGIOUS CONTACTS IN THE LATE ANTIQUE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD AND MEDIEVAL EUROPE

7-8 November 2019 | CERES Conference Room *Ruhrpott*
Conveners: Alexandra Cuffel & Eduard Iricinschi

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Invoking a Strange God: Rituals of Power and Religious Contacts in the Late Antique Mediterranean World and Medieval Europe

This workshop brings together scholars in the fields of late-antique and medieval magic and Kabbalah in the Mediterranean world and Western Asia to study the role of religious contacts in their historical contexts. The conference advances a three-fold programmatic approach:

- First, its participants are invited to consider the composite nature of primary sources of ancient, late-antique, and medieval of “magic” and Kabbalah as texts documenting the accumulations of practices and ideologies underlying rituals of power. As a result, the first approach aims to uncover paths of circulation and patches of accumulation of these documents.
- Second, the scholars are invited to discuss historical instances of late-antique and medieval magic and Kabbalah as instances of mutual influence, exchanges, and appropriations among various historical religious traditions. As such, this approach encourages the participants to explore the malleable role of “tradition” and “change” in the discourses associated with practices of ritual power and invocations of divine names.
- Third, the scholars are invited to undertake analyses of the materiality associated with rituals of power in various ancient and medieval Jewish and Christian traditions. In doing this, the third programmatic approach seeks to highlight the role of materiality in the transmission of occult religious traditions, such as magic and Kabbalah.

The outcome of this workshop will be a special issue dedicated to the above approaches, to be published in the Journal *Entangled Religions* in 2020.

Thursday, 07 November 2019

09:00 - 09:30 **Welcome Address & General Introduction**
Alexandra Cuffel & Kianoosh Rezania (Bochum)

Session 1: Matters of Magic

Chair: Jonna-Margarethe Mäder (Bochum)

09:30 - 10:15 **Trading Ritual Objects and Traditions: Textual and Material Links between Egypt and Mesopotamia during Late Antiquity**
Joseph Sanzo (Los Angeles)

10:15 - 11:00 **Tradition and Change in Graeco-Roman Magic Rituals: An Archaeological Perspective on Curse Tablets in the Late Antique Latin West**
Magali Bailliot (Paris)

11:00 - 11:15 **Coffee Break**

11:15 - 12:00 **Wrecking God: Aesthetics of Destruction and Magical Activity in Roman Ruins**
Silvia Alfayé (Zaragoza)

12:00 - 12:30 **Discussions**

12:30 - 02:00 **Lunch**

Session 2: Strange Encounters

Chair: Kianoosh Rezania (Bochum)

02:00 - 02:45 **Fallen Angels, From 1 Enoch to Some Medieval Unknown Texts**
Moshe Idel (Jerusalem)

02:45 - 03:30 **Gnostic Anomalies and Jewish Apotropaic Practices: On Two Footnotes of Gershom Scholem's *Jewish Gnosticism***
Margherita Mantovani (Rome/Bochum)

03:30 - 04:00 **Coffee Break**

Session 3: Stranger Encounters

Chair: Zara Pogossian (Bochum/Rome)

04:00 - 04:45 **How to Gain Power over a Wicked Demon? Different Concepts from the Tobit Tradition**
Beate Ego (Bochum)

04:45 - 05:30 **“The seal and likeness of the image of the Father” (*Psalms-Book*, 2, 22): The Art of Memory in the Late Antique Manichaean Ritual of the *Bēma***
Eduard Iricinschi (Bochum)

05:30 - 06:00 **Discussions**
Chair: Bernd-Christian Otto (Erlangen)

07:30 **Dinner**

Friday, 08 November 2019

Session 4: How to Do Things with Power in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages

Chair: Adam Knobler (Bochum)

09:30 - 10:15 **Cursing beyond the Grave: Imprecations and Jewish Funerary Culture in Antiquity**
Ortal-Paz Saar (Utrecht)

10:15 - 11:00 **Love, Sex and Marriage in Ancient and Early Medieval Jewish Magic**
Yuval Harari (Beer Sheva)

11:00 - 11:15 **Coffee Break**

11:15 - 12:00 **Combinatoric Rituals to Know God: Llull's *Ars magna*, Practical Kabbalah and Geomancy**
Benedek Láng (Budapest)

12:00 - 12:30 **Discussions**

12:30 - 02:00 **Lunch**

Session 5: How to Do Things with Power in the Middle Ages and Reformation

Chair: Alexandra Cuffel (Bochum)

02:00 - 02:45 **Practical Kabbalistic Uses of an Ashkenazi Exegetical Genre: On the Commentaries on the Seventy Names of Metatron and Related Textual Units**
Agata Paluch (Berlin)

02:45 - 03:30 **The Magician's Choice: Magic in the Age of the Reformation**
Frank Klaassen (Saskatoon)

03:30 - 04:00 **Coffee Break**

Session 6: Conclusions and Plans for Further Research Meetings

Chair: Alexandra Cuffel & Eduard Iricinschi (Bochum)

04:00 - 04:30 **Concluding Remarks**