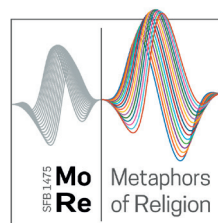


RUHR  
UNIVERSITÄT  
BOCHUM

RUB



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

# Metaphors of Religion: Comparative Perspectives, Theoretical Potential, and Methodic Innovation



27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2025



RUB Convention Centre,  
Universitätsstr. 150,  
44801 Bochum, Germany



## Welcome to the International Conference: **METAPHORS OF RELIGION**

Metaphors shape how religious communities articulate the inexpressible, negotiate meaning, and transmit traditions. This interdisciplinary conference explores metaphors as fundamental elements of religious language, thought, and practice across cultures and historical periods. Key discussions center on the role of metaphors in the emergence and transformation of religious language, the comparative study of metaphoric patterns in traditions such as Buddhism, Christianity, Daoism, Islam, and Zoroastrianism, and the cognitive and linguistic mechanisms underlying metaphorical meaning-making.

Further topics include how religious metaphors adapt in response to intercultural encounters and historical shifts; the potential of digital and computational methods for analyzing metaphors across languages and large corpora; and the interplay of metaphor with material culture and visual media in religious contexts.

By addressing these questions, the conference highlights the theoretical and methodological importance of metaphor studies for understanding religious diversity, the dynamics of belief systems, and the shared or divergent ways humans imagine the divine, salvation, and ethical life. The programme brings together perspectives from linguistics, religious studies, cognitive science, and digital humanities to advance innovative approaches in the study of religious metaphors.

# PROGRAM

## Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER

08:30–09:45 Registration and welcome coffee

**09:45–11:00 WELCOME & INTRODUCTION**  
Room: 2a

09:45–10:00 Welcoming address of Martin Paul, Rector of Ruhr University  
10:00–10:15 Introduction to the conference by Volkhard Krech, spokesperson of the CRC 1475  
10:15–10:30 Introduction to the program by the coordination team of the CRC 1475  
10:30–11:00 First discussion

11:00–11:30 Coffee break

**11:30–13:30 SESSION 1:  
The Potential of Metaphor: Theoretical and Philological Perspectives I**  
Room: 2a  
*Chair: Camilla Di Biase-Dyson*

11:30–12:10 Metaphor, Transcendence, and the Ineffable  
*Jacob Hesse*  
12:10–12:50 Questioning the Metaphoricity of Sexual Imagery in ‘Gnostic’ Mythopoesis  
*Wanja Kirchhoff*  
12:50–13:30 What About the Index of Religious Metaphors?  
*Volkhard Krech*

13:30–14:30 Lunch break

<b>14:30–16:30 SESSION 2: The Potential of Metaphor: Theoretical and Philological Perspectives II</b> Room: 2a <i>Chair: Kianoosh Rezania</i>	<b>SESSION 3: Religious Metaphors of Experience and Emotion</b> Room: 1 <i>Chair: Giacomella Orofino</i>
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14:30–15:10 Ontologies and Comparative Metaphor Studies: Interlinked Catalogues of Elements with Religious, Cosmological and Anthropological Relevance <i>Velizar Sadovski</i>	Like an Ant Trapped in a Circle of Fire: Incorporating Aristotelian Mediety into Sharia Through a Metaphor by Al-Ghazali <i>Yasmine Karray</i>
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15:10–15:50	True Speech and the Event Structure Metaphor: How Etymology May Help Clarify a Key Indo-Iranian Religious Concept <i>Lucien Van Beek</i>	Famine and the Sword: Apocalypse in Early Modern Iran <i>Saman Mahdevar</i>
15:50–16:30	Metaphoric Expressions of ‘Casualty’ and ‘Chance’ and Their Conceptualization Between the Universal and the Particular <i>Flavia Pompeo</i>	Atmospheres, Outbursts and Flows: The Role of Emotion Metaphors in Theories of Religion <i>Gerrit Lange</i>
16:30–17:00	Coffee break	
17:00–18:30	<b>KEYNOTE</b> <b>Religious Metaphors, Embodiment and Multimodality</b> <i>Eve Sweetser</i>	
Room: 2a		
18:30–19:00	Transfer to dinner	
19:00–22:00	Dinner <i>Location: tba</i>	



## Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER

09:00–11:00	<b>SESSION 4:</b> <b>Digital and Computational Approaches to Metaphor Analysis</b> <i>Chair: Tatjana Scheffler</i>	
Room: 2a		
09:00–09:40	The Venom of Heresy: A Computational Approach to Tracking the Development of Anti-heretical Hate Propaganda Metaphors in Western Christendom, 1000–1150 <i>David Zbiral</i>	
09:40–10:20	Counterfactual Metaphor <i>Markus Egg</i>	
10:20–11:00	Religious Metaphors at Scale: Digital and Computational Approaches to Metaphor Identification and Analysis <i>Frederik Elwert, Lina Rodenhansen &amp; Sebastian Reimann</i>	
11:00–11:30	Coffee break	

11:30–13:30	<b>SESSION 5:</b> <b>Metaphors of Life and Death</b> Room: 2a <i>Chair: Reinhold Gleib</i>	<b>SESSION 6:</b> <b>Metaphors of Space and Movement I</b> Room: 1 <i>Chair: Christian Meyer</i>
11:30–12:10	Death is down: Orientational metaphor, conceptual blending, and the katabasis theme in three Indo-European mythological texts <i>Anna Bonifazi &amp; Riccardo Ginevra</i>	Metaphorical Space between WAY and LIGHT. Transcendence (or transcending) in early China <i>Licia Di Giacinto</i>
12:10–12:50	Wind as an image of the one in the sources on vraytyas <i>Tiziana Pontillo</i>	“that Christ [...] was raised (ἐγήγερται) on the third day [...] and that he was seen (ὤφθη) by Peter and then by the Twelve” (1 Cor 15.3b-5) – metaphors Paul and the Corinthians lived by <i>Bärbel Bosenius</i>
12:50–13:30	The Path None May Escape: Death Metaphor in the Avestan and Pahlavi Aogəmadaēčā <i>Neda Mohtashami</i>	Sacred as Space: Comparative Metaphors of Religious Landscapes in Yoruba Religion and Christianity <i>Ojo Rapheal</i>
13:30–14:30	Lunch Break	
14:30–16:30	<b>SESSION 7:</b> <b>The Potential of Metaphor: Theoretical and Philological Perspectives III</b> Room: 2a <i>Chair: Rosel Pientka-Hinz</i>	<b>SESSION 8:</b> <b>Metaphors of Space and Movement II</b> Room: 1 <i>Chair: Knut Martin Stünkel</i>
14:30–15:10	The Guardians of Hours: The Phenomenology of Ritual Time in the Shiite Ritual Guidebook <i>Zahra Naghshband</i>	From Musical to Religious Metaphor: The Meta-Schema for Spiritual Advancement and Its Role in Cognitive Semantics <i>Mihailo Antović</i>
15:10–15:50	The Sun-God as Experience: A Metaphorical and Phenomenological Exploration of a Solar Hymn from the Egyptian New Kingdom <i>Camilla Di Biase-Dyson</i>	Researching Qur’anic WAY Metaphors Using Close and Distant Reading <i>Johann Büssow &amp; Roman Seidel</i>

15:50–16:30	Accessing and Assessing Conceptual and Deliberate Metaphors in Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs <i>Julia Troche</i>	Metaphor, Space, and Worship: on Proximization in Religious Broadcasting <i>Monika Tosik</i>
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16:30–17:00	Coffee break
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17:00–18:30	<b>KEYNOTE</b> <b>Metaphor and Religion: How Can Deliberate Metaphor Theory Help?</b> <i>Gerard Steen</i>
Room: 2a	

18:30–19:00	Transfer to conference dinner
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19:00–22:00	Conference dinner <i>Location: tba</i>
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**Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER**

09:00–11:00	<b>SESSION 9:</b> <b>Materiality and Visuality in Metaphors I</b> <i>Chair: Tim Karis</i>
Room: 2a	

09:00–09:40	More than Symbols: Metaphor, Blending, and the Dynamics of Meaning in Late Medieval Religious Imagery <i>Marius Rimmel</i>
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09:40–10:20	“Material Metaphors”: A Working Group in the CRC “Metaphors of Religion” <i>Martin Radermacher</i>
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10:20–11:00	Water is Purification: Scientology’s Use of Pictorial Metaphors in Religious Meaning-making <i>Dunja Sharbat Dar &amp; Anna Kira Hippert</i>
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11:00–11:30	Coffee break
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11:30–13:30	<b>SESSION 10:</b> <b>Materiality and Visuality in Metaphors II</b> Room: 2a <i>Chair: Marion Eggert</i>
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<b>SESSION 11:</b> <b>Metaphors of Kinship</b> Room: 1 <i>Chair: Monika Tosik</i>
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11:30–12:10	The Egyptian Gods as Metaphor in Imperial Rome: Historical and Material Considerations <i>Bryan Brinkmann</i>	Our Father, Our Fathers: A Study of Religious Metaphor of God's Fatherhood in African Christianity and African Indigenous Religions <i>Benson Igboin</i>
12:10–12:50	Do You See What I See? Meaning-making from Visual Representations of Samantabhadra <i>Renée Ford</i>	Lilies and Roses: Unveiling the Metaphors of the Virgin Mary and the Ideal Woman in Prayers and Folk Songs <i>Veronika Jávör-Szelid</i>
12:50–13:30	Urban Building Metaphors: The Shape Christianity Takes in the Neo-Liberal City <i>Veronika Eufinger</i>	We are all children of God, the Father (or Mother)?! - Polarization in the conceptualization of God-human relations <i>Lina Rodenhäusen</i>
13:30–14:30	Lunch Break	
14:30–16:30	<b>SESSION 12:</b> <b>Anthropomorphic Metaphors</b> Room: 2a <i>Chair: Carmen Meinert</i>	<b>SESSION 13:</b> <b>Further Perspectives</b> Room: 1 <i>Chair: Stefanie Dipper</i>
14:30–15:10	Anthropomorphic Metaphors in Orthodox Church Historiography of Eastern Europe <i>Pavlo Yermieiev</i>	A Linguistic Approach to Metaphors in Sign(ed) Languages: Materiality, Visuality, Cognitive & Methodological Issues <i>Davide Astori</i>
15:10–15:50	The Kingly Buddha and Royal Deities: Kingship as Metaphor in Sri Lankan Buddhist Texts <i>Stephen C. Berkwitz</i>	Shifting Metaphors. Stereotypical Portraits of Religion in Soviet Poster Art <i>Jasmin Eder &amp; Katharina Neef</i>
15:50–16:30	Sun Disks and Sacred Bodies: Metaphors or Light in Early South Asian Art <i>Jessie Pons &amp; Patrick Krüger</i>	"Who is... Who is that man who speaks in front of others?" <i>Atko Rimmel</i>
16:30–17:00	Coffee break	
17:00–18:30	Concluding Discussion	
18:30	End of conference	

# DIRECTIONS TO RUB CONVENTION CENTER

## Public transportation

The conference will be held in the university's Convention Center or "Veranstaltungszentrum (= VZ)" on the Main Campus. The campus can most easily be reached via the subway line U35, which departs from Bochum main station in the direction of "Querenburg/Hustadt" every couple of minutes. You reach the campus (with the station called "Ruhr-Universität") at the 7th stop or roughly after 10 minutes. To reach the Convention Center, turn right from the subway station, and just walk across campus, past the library, until you reach the Convention Center building.



## Contact

General organizational issues:  
[sfb1475-coordination@rub.de](mailto:sfb1475-coordination@rub.de)