111 Books on Religion and Politics
A Selection
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Academics working in the humanities and social sciences often find it difficult to present the results of their work: Our ideas and concepts are complex and fluid; and they are never a final statement beyond discussion. To the contrary – they are meant to be rethought and refined by other researchers. One of the classical and particularly appropriate formats to present our research is the book. Of course, writing monographs is not all we do: most of what we write will be published in the form of research articles in journals or in edited books; in addition, some of us write essays; others have produced films; again others organised and contributed to exhibitions. Writing books, nevertheless, is the central and most important aspect of our work. For this reason we promised in our proposal to write books and we are happy to present the result of many years of research in the form of a collection of 111 books published since 2009. Books are the format in which complex ideas can be developed in sufficient detail. Books, typically, are the result of many years of work – either of a single researcher in her chamber or of many researchers collaborating in a larger project.

Many beautiful books in this collection have originally been written as doctoral dissertations. Writing such a book is a highly adventurous endeavour: The young researcher often feels left alone with her questions (even if she is not), and the best young researchers have sizeable doubts as to the validity and originality of their ideas. Other books are Habilitationen – books embarked upon with the aim of earning a professorial position in the German academic system: Many of the most important books in Germany have been written as Habilitationen – they are the research of academics in their best age, ideally, as in our cluster, working in a protected space and with plenty of time. Again other monographs have been written by senior academics. It has often been deplored that is has become exceptionally difficult for scholars in the modern university to find the time necessary for such projects. We are very grateful for the generous research conditions in a Cluster of excellence which make it much easier to write those books.

All of the books collected on this list have been written or edited by scholars working in our cluster. They are thus all results of interdisciplinary collaboration and discussion. Some, though of course not all of these books follow an interdisciplinary approach; others are interdisciplinarily reflected contributions to the discourse of a specific discipline. The boundaries between disciplines, however, are not fixed; they need to be constantly rethought and renegotiated. We have therefore ordered the books according to historical periods (antiquity, middle and early modern ages, modernity) with the additional cross-epochal category.

This list is not meant to select the best books written in our cluster – we would find it difficult, or even absurd, to make such choices. It is a representative list aimed at presenting an appropriately complex picture of the many different aspects of our work. Our choices, of course, are highly subjective – it is not even sure that we were fully aware of all books written. In any event: It was great fun to look through the many fascinating books, and we hope that it will be as enjoyable to scroll through our list.

Prof. Dr. Nils Jansen, Prof. Dr. Gerd Althoff, PD Dr. Astrid Reuter
Principal Investigators of the Cluster of Excellence
"Religion and Politics" of Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster (WWU)
In modern research on the Old Testament, both the origins and the theology of the Book of Exodus are the subject of intensive debate. In the form of twelve lectures given at a symposium in honour of the 70th birthday of Rainer Albertz, internationally renowned experts address various aspects of research on the Book of Exodus. Among other things, the resulting volume covers its literary embedding in the Pentateuch, the historical background to the priestly passages, the narrative of God, the significance of the statutes documented in the Book of Exodus as well as various individual stipulations and even the relevance of the Exodus tradition for Christian theology. The studies investigate the priestly Exodus narrative and its historical background in the Persian period and its imperial ideology (J. Wöhrle), the contextual relations within the Hexateuch and the Pentateuch (R. Achenbach; R. Albertz), the scribal efforts to determine Jewish identity in the multi-religious culture of the post-exilic period (S. Olyan; H. Utzschneider, C. Nihan) and the correlation of the concepts of freedom and law (T. Krüger). Further essays refer to sociological issues (T. Römer; R. Schmitt) and problems of literary form and hermeneutics (J. Ebach; R. Kessler; F. Crüsemann).

The historical-critical commentary on the Book of Exodus provides the reader with a detailed exegesis (about 700 pages) of a central part of that foundation chart (Torah, Pentateuch), by which ancient Israel intended to define its religious and ethnic identity after the loss of its own statehood in a new way. Aiming at this goal, different elite groups of priests and lay people had to find a compromise. The theological discussions about Israel’s historical, legal and cultic foundations, which were held by these groups over a period of about 500 years, including Israel’s relations to other nations, will be reconstructed from the given Hebrew text of the Book of Exodus by using literary- and composition-critical methods. The relevance of these discussions for the present day will be determined. That way a new model for explaining the formation of the Pentateuch will be tested. Finally, the reader will find several summaries and digressions to get some information about the possible historical background of the Exodus and Sinai events including the legal and cultic institutions derived from them.

Over the last decades, family and household religion has become a topic of Old Testament scholarship in its own right, fed by what were initially three distinct approaches: the religious-historical approach, the gender-oriented approach and the archaeological approach. The first one pursues answers to questions of the commonality and difference between varieties of family religion and describes the household and family religions of Mesopotamia, Syria/Ugarit, Israel, Philistia, Egypt, Greece and Rome. Gender-oriented approaches also contribute uniquely important insights into family and household religion. Pioneers of this sort of investigation show that, although women in ancient Israelite societies were very restricted in their participation in the official cult, there were familial rituals performed in domestic environments in which women played prominent roles, especially as related to fertility, childbirth, and food preparation. Archaeologists have worked to illuminate many aspects of this family religion as enacted by and related to the nuclear family unit and have found evidence that domestic cults were more important in Israel than has previously been understood. One might even conceive of every family as having actively partaken in ritual activities within its domestic environment. The book analyzes the appropriateness of the combined term family and household religion and identifies the types of family that existed in ancient Israel on the basis of both literary and archaeological evidence. Comparative evidence from Iron Age Philistia, Transjordan, Syria, and Phoenicia is presented. The book presents a typology of cult places that extends from domestic cults to local sanctuaries and state temples. It details the beliefs of family religion as expressed in the almost 3,000 individual Hebrew personal names that have so far been recorded in epigraphic and biblical material. The Hebrew onomasticon is further compared with 1,400 Ammonite, Moabite, Aramean and Phoenician names. These data encompass the vast majority of known Hebrew personal names and a substantial sample of the names from surrounding cultures. In this impressive compilation of evidence, the authors describe the variety of rites performed by families at home, at a neighborhood shrine or at work. Burial rituals and the ritual care for the dead are examined. A comprehensive bibliography, extensive appendixes and several indexes round out the textual material to form a one-volume compendium of Ancient Israelite Family and Household Religion in the Iron Age.


The world of ancient Greece witnessed some of the most sophisticated and varied experiments with federalism in the pre-modern era. In the volatile interstate environment of Greece, federalism was a creative response to the challenge of establishing regional unity, while at the same time preserving a degree of local autonomy. To reconcile the forces of integration and independence, Greek federal states introduced, for example, the stratification of legal practice, a federal grammar of religious festivals and cults and the notion of proportional repre-
sentation. Federalism in Greek Antiquity provides the first comprehensive reassessment of the topic. It comprises detailed contributions on all federal states in Aegean Greece and its periphery. With every chapter written by a leading expert in the field, the book also incorporates thematic sections that place the topic in a broader historical and social-scientific context. Identity and Integration (Preliminary works cf. P. Funke - M. Haake (eds.), *Greek Federal States and Their Sanctuaries* [2013]). This first comprehensive study for half a century integrates all the available bodies of evidence into an accessible account. The book combines scholarly trends and approaches from diverse fields including classics, history, religion and cult, political science and law.


The cult of Iuppiter Dolichenus, the local deity of the small town of Doliche in modern South-East Turkey, rapidly spread to large parts of the Roman Empire in the 2nd century CE. The debate surrounding the so-called oriental cults in the Roman Empire as well as the results of the excavations undertaken in the sanctuary of Doliche have provided grounds for a re-evaluation of various aspects of the cult. The papers compiled in this volume are written from an archaeological and historical perspective and examine a wide spectrum of questions, from the importance of the cult in the West, the means by which it spread and its status within the Roman army to the role of women in the cult. Furthermore, this book contains a comprehensive analysis of the known sanctuaries of Iuppiter Dolichenus, a presentation of the finds from the Danube region and an extensive report on the then newly discovered sanctuary of the god at Vindolanda. By touching upon such diverse issues, the volume contributes to our understanding of the position of the cult of Iuppiter Dolichenus within the religious belief system of the Roman Empire.


Based on the sociological theory that descriptions of the “other(s)” and the “self” are correlated and situational parts of construction processes, the study examines the narrative and legal texts of the biblical Book of Deuteronomy, which regulate and arrange Israel’s contact with foreign peoples, gods and (ritual) practices. It shows a wide range from the command to love the resident alien (Deut 10:19) to the request of a radical annihilation in the form of the ban regarding the Canaanite peoples (Deut 7). By combining literary historical analysis and sociological insights, the study shows that the categorization of persons (Deut 7 et al.) and practices (Deut 18) as foreign
or alien is frequently a result of an active attribution. The monograph traces the Deuteronomy’s literary layers in pre-exilic, exilic and post-exilic times linking the various attributions and evaluations with the different authors’ historical and social settings. It becomes clear that, in particular, harsh demarcations are drawn when one’s own identity is questioned by crises.

Knäpper, Katharina, Religion und Religionspolitik der frühen Achaimeniden in ihrem Verhältnis zum Avesta (Quellen und Forschungen zur Antiken Welt, vol. 57), Munich: Herbert Utz 2011.

The religious habits of the early Achaemenians are a commonplace of scholarly research. The key question of most studies seems to be whether or not the Achaemenians were Zoroastrians. The overwhelming diversity of the given answers leads to the conclusion that this question might be wrong. The present book aims at comparing Avestan and Achaemenian religious structures, habits and practices without using the phenomena as complementary sources for each other on an analytical level. Thus it seems possible to describe the Achaemenian religion in a more precise way beyond misdirecting terminology and to reclassify it within Iranian religious history.


The Kushite cemetery of Sanam is the main focus of this publication of Angelika Lohwasser, which is the publication of her habilitation, submitted at the Free University Berlin in 2008 and awarded with the Heinz Maier-Leibnitz-Preis of the German Research Foundation in 2009. The cemetery of Sanam (North-Sudan) was excavated by Francis Ll. Griffith in 1912/13 and published in a preliminary report only in 1923. The documentation of this excavation is housed today in the Griffith-Institute in Oxford and was studied by the author. Moreover, original objects of the excavation, today kept in the Egyptian Museum Berlin, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden, and Musées Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire, Brussels, were included into the study. Several of these objects are published for the first time. The first part focuses on the archaeological material of the cemetery of Sanam (c. 800–600 BC). Since no comprehensive investigation of funerary material of the Napatan period exists until now, this study should act as a reference of the funerary culture of that time. Tombs, burials as well as categories of objects with typologies and systematic analysis present a basis for comparisons with other cemeteries of that time. In the second part the material is investigated according to different methods, focussing on various views. These aspects – chronology, regionality, hierarchy, culture and individuality – complement and supplement each other to produce a comprehensive
picture of the cemetery. This interpretation can be read as a cross-section of the funerary society. Based on the proximity to the royal cemetery of Nuri and the workshops found in the city of Sanam, one can assume that the cemetery of Sanam was used by the inhabitants of the city who were responsible for the administration and endowment of the pyramids of Nuri, and belonged to the middle-class. Social differences within this middle-class can be specified by the quantity and quality of the grave goods as well as by the elaboration of the tomb itself. The ethnic affiliation of the people cannot be determined. The earlier excavators tried to distinguish between Nubian and Egyptian burials. But the study of Angelika Lohwasser shows that in the case of Sanam this is not possible. One has to speak of a Napatan funerary culture, which can be characterized by three elements: 1) traditional, indig Nubian; 2) of Egyptian origin, already imported in the New Kingdom; 3) contemporary Egyptian elements. Finally, the author tries to present the funerary community in all its complexity. Apart from the structural picture, the discussion of specific burials provides the picture of the burial practices in Sanam. Last but not least, a narrative of the burial, as it is presented in the material culture of Sanam, is explained.


The antique Kushite cemetery of Sanam is the main focus of the publication The Kushite Cemetery of Sanam. A Non-Royal Burial Ground of the Nubian Capital by Egyptologist Prof. Dr. Angelika Lohwasser from the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”. This book is the English summary of her habilitation thesis Aspekte der napatani schen Gesellschaft. Archäologisches Inventar und funeräre Praxis im Friedhof von Sanam – Perspektiven einer kulturhistorischen Interpretation that was awarded the Heinz Maier-Leibnitz-Preis of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) in 2009 and published in 2012 by the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW) Press. The English version, published in 2010, addresses a broad audience by comprehensively summarizing all parts of the study, while limiting some of the detailed discussions.

In the 9th century BCE a Kushite tribe residing near Gebel Barkal in modern Sudan enlarged its sphere of control further to the north. They gained control over Egypt in the late 8th century BCE and formed the 25th Dynasty in Egypt, which ruled until 663 BCE, when they were replaced by the 26th Dynasty from the city of Sais in the Egyptian Delta and returned to Nubia.

The site of Sanam is situated about 25km south of the 4th cataract, vis-à-vis the sacred centre of Kush, the Gebel Barkal. Today, it is buried beneath the modern town of Merawi. The first excavation by Griffith took place in the winter of 1912/1913 and focused on three different parts: the cemetery, the temple of the Kushite king Taharqo and the more than 250m long treasury. Unfortunately, the results were never fully published, but his documentation comprises about 1600 pages of handwritten tomb-cards with sketch-drawings, the text of the tomb-cards typewritten in a revised form, 216 cards with photographs and copies of sketches, a plan of the cemetery, about 600 photographs, an envelope with clippings of articles, and a list of benefactors with the distribution of objects to museums and antiquarians. All the memoranda are preserved in the Griffith Institute in Oxford. Angelika
Lohwasser’s study is based on Griffith’s documentation of these records and evaluates them, yielding a detailed view of Nubian society and the burial customs of a new African Empire.

The cemetery is the largest known non-royal burial ground from the Napatan period (8th–4th century BCE) of the Kingdom of Kush in Sudan. 1619 tombs were located in the cemetery, most of which were excavated. In general, there was only one burial per grave, in some cases accompanied by items of funerary rituals and grave goods, such as amulets, beads, jewellery, offering trays, incense burners, vessels, toiletry or weapons.

Based on the proximity to the royal cemetery of Nuri and the workshops found in the city of Sanam, one can assume that the cemetery of Sanam was used by the inhabitants of the city who were responsible for the administration and endowment of the pyramids of Nuri and belonged to the middle class. Social differences within this middle-class can be specified by quantity and quality of the grave goods and by the elaboration of the tomb itself.

Due to the vicinity of Nuri and Napata and some trade routes, the people had access to exquisite materials and goods. The grave goods include an unusual amount of imported material, such as semi-precious stones, ivory and precious metal.

The ethnic affiliation of the people cannot be determined. The earlier excavators tried to distinguish between Nubian and Egyptian burials. But Angelika Lohwasser’s study shows that in the case of Sanam this is not possible. One has to speak of a Napatan funerary culture, which can be characterized by three elements: 1) traditional, indigenous Nubian; 2) of Egyptian origin, already imported into the New Kingdom; 3) contemporary Egyptian elements.

A new book by Prof. Johannes Schnocks, a Catholic theologian at the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”, examines divine and human violence in Old Testament texts and their reception. “Violence is mentioned repeatedly in the Old Testament. In some texts even God himself is referred to as the origin of violent events, or else he is said to demand violent action from humans,” the theologian explained. His book, The Old Testament and Violence, presents the results of his research project at the Cluster of Excellence: D1 Divine Violence: Religious-Historical and Reception-Hermeneutical Analyses of the Images of God in the Hebrew Bible.

Although historical-critical exegesis reveals the historical contexts of many cases of violence and therefore makes the potential for violence in most of the texts more comprehensible, such texts nevertheless remain objectionable even when the history of their reception is taken into account, according to the author. That is even truer when they have been used in the course of history to justify violence between humans: “Taking the reception history into consideration, in particular, there is the difficult question of whether in the course of history the texts’ literary violence led to the justification of violence among people or whether it even did so by necessity, as many
participants in the current discussion about religion and
violence claim.” The study therefore begins with a brief
summary of the state of discussion, which has been espe-
cially driven by the claims by Egyptologist Jan Assmann
that monotheistic religions are especially violent. From
there, it examines selected texts in the Hebrew Bible about
violence where God is depicted as the perpetrator and
where child victims, blood vengeance or the death penalty
are involved. The author goes on to discuss the reception
of texts of the Hebrew Bible in the Books of Maccabees.
To what extent did this later biblical literature draw on
the Hebrew Bible to justify violent actions or rule? The
reception of the Book of Joshua is discussed, as well as the
argument that the Maccabean uprising was a pure war of
religion, and the literary depiction of violent actions in
connection with emotions like zeal or wrath. Providing
an outlook at the end of the book, the theologian uses the
example of Psalm 79 to show how the Old Testament was
used in the Middle Ages to create arguments for Crusades
propaganda as well as for the justification of violence.

Schnocks, Johannes, Psalmen (Grundwissen Theologie,
vol. 3473), Paderborn: Schöningh 2014.

Psalms are poetical texts,
which bring before God
the questions of mankind
and the relationship of God
and man in a meditative,
complaining or enthusiasti-
cally praising fashion. Their
compilation in the biblical
Book of Psalms has
remained until today of the
greatest significance for
private spirituality and
communal worship as well
as for theological scholarship. This introduction offers an
overall orientation over current questions of scholarship
on the Book of Psalms. Methodological and theological
paragraphs are linked with the interpretation of exemplary
psalms. This textbook sees itself as a companion for
students of divinity as well as an introduction for indepen-
dent study.

Vos, J. Cornelis de, Heiliges Land und Nähe Gottes.
Wandlungen alttestamentlicher Landvorstellungen
in frühjüdischen und neutestamentlichen Schriften
(Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und
Neuen Testaments, vol. 244), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck &
Ruprecht 2012.

The quest for nearness to
God is often connected
with particular locations,
the symbolic value of which
usually by far exceeds the
concrete reality. It is this
dynamic that Vos explores
in this slightly revised
version of his habilitation
thesis (Münster). Since
God, the people and the
land are so tightly bound
together in the HB, Vos
asks how Jewish communities in the Hellenistic tradition
and those living in the Diaspora without a longing for
return responded to this. He identifies two trends: idealiza-
tion and substitution. The idealization of the land is
explored through studies of the LXX (especially Tobit and
the Letter of Jeremiah), Josephus, the Genesis Apocry-
phon, Jubilees, the Letter of Aristeas, 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch.
This tendency, Vos argues, is already evident in the HB
and expresses itself in a range of ways from the characteri-
zation of the land as better than reality, through mythologizing (e.g. claims that the land is the centre of the world), to assertions that the land is intrinsically holy. Analysis of the second tendency (substitution), principally found in the NT, constitutes the bulk of the book. The HB’s connection between God, people and land is retained, but the land is substituted by other spaces (e.g. the Kingdom of God, the community of believers) and the people are defined in new ways (i.e. incorporating Jews and Pagans). So there is a shift from concrete to universal and transcendent. A separate chapter is dedicated to Philo of Alexandria, who occupies a middle position between these two trends. This is an interesting study marked by careful reflection on the methodological and linguistic challenges, broad engagement with the sources, and appropriate contextualization. A rewarding read for anyone interested in the reception of the HB, questions of diversity and identity in Early Judaism or the origins of Christianity.


Cornelis de Vos examines the impact and reception of the Decalogue up to 200 CE, scrutinizing the versions of the Decalogue, and the history of the Decalogue in ancient Jewish writings, the New Testament, and early Christian writings. Almost all texts show an interconnection of identity and normativity: the Decalogue functions as an expression of fundamental moral concepts of socio-religious groups. At the same time, these groups enhance the Decalogue with normativity – sometimes even expanding on it – to make it a text that generates their own identity. This is the first study that presents an in-depth and continuous analysis of the early history of the Decalogue.


In Old Testament research the literary character, the time and place as well as the intention of the so-called priestly passages of the Pentateuch are in discussion. The study shows that the priestly passages in the ancestors’ account – but only there – are to be understood as a redactional layer. The priestly redactors took up several sources and for the first time put them together to a continuous story. The priestly passages were written in the early Persian period by the returnees from the Babylonian exile. Through the ancestors they describe themselves as the real people of God. They enforce their claims to the land. And they present their idea of how to coexist with the nations in the neighbouring countries and with the people living in the land.
Counsel and advice is a well-known procedure in medieval politics. That lordship was founded on the consent of the followers is an often used phrase used by the mighty. But exact knowledge about procedures of counselling and the chances of advice to be followed doesn’t exist until today. The main reason for this is that procedures of decision-making were mostly informal and secret. Contemporaries did not lift the ‘arcana imperii.’ This book is a first attempt to systematically collect sources which lifted the curtain a little bit and allowed the recognition of forms and rules of counselling. This made it possible to answer the question on a relevant basis of sources to what extent control of power could be established in medieval politics and how many possibilities remained to the mighty to get only the advice they wanted to get.

The title of this book uses a quotation of Bishop Bonizo of Sutri who saw those who executed violence on behalf of the church equal to people who suffered violence for righteousness. His argumentation belongs to many attempts of the papal reform movement to establish new claims of validity for papal superiority in church and world. The book looks especially for the biblical foundation of these claims and discusses especially stories taken from the Old Testament, which the Gregorians used to legitimize violence against disobedient people and infidels. This new doctrine seems to be responsible for a series of conflicts with worldly powers and even for the crusades.


Drawing from a range of archival materials such as depositions and supplications, this book focuses on village communities and their “political languages” in 18th-century Germany. The author argues that at the supreme court of the Holy Roman Empire, village communities used three major strategies to oppose their bailiffs, feudal lords and princes. Firstly, by appealing to notions of liberty, they were often able to forge alliances with the Emperor against intermediate powers. Secondly, by claiming that unpopular political actions jeopardised their livelihood, they used contemporary economic concepts to their advantage. Thirdly, by constantly referring to tradition, they offered an alternative to scholarly concepts of law. These strategies were, Bähr argues, often successful because early modern courts of law were a matrix for mediation, and not just a device for top-down judgment.


The study examines the role of wit, irony and comparable rhetorical phenomena in the political culture of the Anglo-Norman and early Angevin period (1066–1259). The increased relevance of humour in the time discussed seems not so much to be a result of the enthusiasm for ancient literature and satire as rather a response to new norms and ideals of courtly refined behaviour after the Norman Conquest. By means of facetious or ironical remarks, members of the elite could contrast favourably from others: The subtle jest could express intellectual nobleness, disarm a critical situation through the triggered laughing, envelop criticism versus higher-ranking people with a friendly guise or indicate friendship and familiarity. Irony towards inferiors, on the other hand, could hit opponents delicately and humiliate or humble them. Thus, wit and irony can be seen as important rhetorical qualities in the oral communication between the king, his nobles and the clergy. The historiography as well as letters and normative texts from authors like William of Malmesbury, Gerald of Wales, John of Salisbury and Walter Map give evidence for the appreciation of facetia, urbanitas and ironia in 12th- and 13th-century England, inherited as classical ideals of learning and nobleness of mind, and thus deliver rich illustrative material for the social impact of ambiguous speech in a premodern face-to-face society.
The catalogue of an exhibition conducted by two museums in Münster and a team of the Cluster “Religion and Politics” combines the description of famous pieces of sacral art in Westphalia with essays which elucidate the religious background of their foundation. Medieval piety, religious ideas of do ut des and the logic behind the many attempts to secure the salvation of one’s own soul are analyzed by experts of different disciplines.


In the middle of the 8th century, the ruling dynasties of the Frankish kingdom and the Islamic caliphate were both overthrown by coups: Merovingians and Umayyads were replaced by their Carolingian and Abbasid successors. This near-simultaneous occurrence was a mere coincidence, but from the perspective of comparative and global history a number of questions can be asked that shed light on the historical circumstances determining the success of the usurpers. More precisely, the monograph provides an analysis of the political, social, religious and cultural conditions in the Latin West and in the Muslim-ruled Middle East. Depending on these preconditions, the usurpers used different arguments to legitimize their rule. Both dynasties were eager to project the image of sacral rule. The Abbasids claimed to be related to the prophet Muhammad, and therefore to have inherited a particular charisma for themselves; the Carolingians, on the other hand, established a close alliance with the Roman papacy, which resulted in the formulation and propagation of a new concept of institutionalized charisma, based on rituals such as royal anointment and practices such as spiritual kinship. However, the scope of action was quite different: Islam was still in its formative phase, political and religious institutions were still in the process of being established, and society was marked by a remarkable degree of dynamic change in almost every field. By contrast, religious and political institutions in the Latin West had achieved some degree of stability, limiting the freedom of manoeuvre of political actors. The comparison of the two cases of political change offers new insights into religious, cultural and social conditions underlying and shaping the conditions of political action in the Islamic and Christian worlds of the Early Middle Ages.
Entanglement has been on the agenda of scholars active in global history for some time. One of the advantages of the concept is the fact it does not refer to a unidirectional process (such as globalization). Furthermore, the term entanglement denotes specific links between social or territorial units, which appear to be different from each other. Moreover, by using the term entanglement we avoid the suggestion that particular societies or cultures at large might be interwoven; on the contrary, links and connections may be limited to certain areas or periods of time, being distributed unevenly across time and space. We can detect moments of entanglement and disentanglement in specific practices, including the composition of texts as well as handling material artifacts. Religious and political authorities often used artifacts such as books, manuscripts, buildings, textiles or images to enhance their legitimacy or to mark themselves off from others. In certain contexts, religious buildings and liturgical objects were adapted and reappropriated by adherents of other religions; religious sites attracted visitors from different religious and cultural backgrounds, religious norms affected aspects of everyday life such as clothing, medicine or food regulations. Use of religiously charged artifacts entailed definitions of in-groups and out-groups, everyday use of objects drew communities close to each other, but it also drove them apart. These questions are discussed in the volume with reference to specific examples from the middle ages and the early modern period. Subjects treated include the relations between Byzantium and Northern Europe, anti-Latin sentiments in late Byzantine discourse, the rule of Latin crusaders in the Levant, diplomatic ceremonial and greeting practice at the Mughal court, the entangling and disentangling of Islam and Christianity in the churches of Castile and Aragon, material evidence for Jewish-Christian entanglements in the medieval German Empire, entangled histories of the medieval German coronation regalia, entanglement and disentanglement as evidenced by visual expressions of late medieval Ashkenazi existence, and processes of entanglement between Eastern and Western Christianity in sacred art of medieval Cyprus. Theoretical contributions treat terminological problems of epistemological models in medieval studies as well as the interrelationship of cultural entanglement and historical narration.
pressing questions and to implement reforms affecting the political and economic state of 18th-century Scotland. From a cultural-historical perspective the author analyses the forms of communication and the social networks of the Select Society, which contributed to the emergence of what present scholarship calls the “Scottish Enlightenment”. Fleßenkämper thus focuses on the social preconditions of scholarly cooperation which were responsible for the creation, legitimation and dissemination of new ideas. Beyond a detailed history of the Select Society, the book provides a substantiated insight into the general moral norms and practical forms of scholarly exchange in 18th-century Scotland.


In premodern societies persons were not recognized as being really alive but for their relations to other people. Accordingly, the isolation from a community meant a decrease in life and existence. Exclusion could go as far as declaring those who were cut off dead. This concept is based on the perception that death is not only a biological phenomenon but is also determined by the cultural practices of a society. Man dies biologically as a physical individual, and at the same time he dies as a member of a social community. Biological and social death may be coincidental, but they may also be separated. This means that also those still alive biologically can be treated as if already dead by severing all ties with them. Against this background of cultural anthropology the book explores forms of exclusion, which were employed as sanctions for breaches of the social code. The contributions take into view political, social and religious aims of this exclusion, shedding light on it from an interdisciplinary angle. They range from the analysis of ancient oriental sources and texts from the Old Testament to a great variety of explorations of the question in medieval Europe. Emerging is a sometimes surprising number of correspondences and continuities which up to now have frequently been overlooked.


The key issue discussed is about the appearance and self-presentation of the aristocracy in the middle Byzantine period (10th-13th century). A systematic evaluation of all written sources (historiography, hagiography, epistolography, testaments, sigillography, epigraphy) leads to detailed insights into the dynamics of the upper stratum of Byzantine society. It became evident that aristocratic families competed with each other on various levels. The capital Constantinople increasingly turned into a central stage that offered them multiform possibilities to display themselves. Strategies of display formed attire, cultivated behaviour, the emphasis on noble birth and genealogy, the design of residential
properties, social welfare, religious foundations (monasteries, churches) or the sponsorship of science and the arts. Those aspects taken together show the intention to create a positive image that both adds to the reputation and increases the social capital of Byzantine aristocracy.


The formation of the philosophy of history in the 18th century has been described as the secularization of Christian eschatology by several influential writers. The idea that history has a telic course was, according to that position, transformed from God’s plan of salvation of mankind to political history. Such claims have been used to justify different normative claims, reaching from a strong criticism on the project of philosophy of history in general up to an apology of theology in the modern age. The book seeks to use the secularization model in a third way. It develops a methodology according to which analogies in the structure of ideas that can historically be traced back to a Christian origin are evidence for a secularization process. This process, however, is not necessarily to be judged as illegitimate. The book aims at evaluating in how far Kant’s philosophy of history contains secularized elements of Christian theology of history. The main part of the book elaborates a detailed interpretation of Kant’s texts on history. Two results shall be highlighted: Firstly, the teleological view Kant presents seems to share a conservative trait with the traditional theological view on history. When reflecting on history, Kantian actors have to assume that everything is useful for something. Even seemingly bad facts are to be interpreted as made by nature with useful aims. Secondly, Kant recognizes that in the sphere of politics there is a cooperation dilemma: No one can pursue moral ideals in a successful way because everyone has to fear that others will interfere. Kant argues that, if moral actors should see themselves able to contribute to political progress, they have to assume that there is progress yet, guaranteed by a high-order agency that he calls “nature” or “providence”. Both aspects taken together, despite the differences between Kantian philosophy of history and the traditional theological concept of history, it seems that Kant endorses a strong belief in historical progress that even serves as a kind of theodicy.


George Frideric Handel’s Judas Maccabaeus is one of the most significant English oratorios of the 18th century. Taking up a topos used in England since the 16th century identifying the British with the biblical people of Israel, Handel composed a number of biblical oratorios reflecting the political situation at the time. Through its association with the Duke of Cumberland, the Jacobite Rising or the struggle
for cultural identity, *Judas Maccabaeus* is charged with political significance and thus a perfect example of the entanglements between religion and politics as depicted in oratorios. The authors examine the work from the perspective of their respective disciplines (musicology, theology, history, English studies and Jewish studies), from its textual source and the composition of the work to its reception in the 20th century. Detailed studies examine the literary and musical adaptation of the underlying theme of violence and war including the theological and political implications and its reception.


The new monograph by Prof. Nils Jansen, law professor at the Cluster of Excellence 'Religion and Politics' examines theology, philosophy and law in the late scholastic teaching of restitution. The book paints an expansive picture of extra-contractual claims to restitution in the early modern discourse of natural law. According to Jansen, core assessments made in the understanding of restitution are still ubiquitous in European law and central elements of this doctrine continue to prove useful today. The book has been published by Mohr Siebeck Press and presents the results of Cluster Project A2-8: The doctrine of restitution in 16th-century scholasticism.

Restitution was originally one of the central doctrines of medieval and early modern moral theology, which integrated large sections of the law of debt, profit, liability and indemnity into a closed system. In its developed form, this doctrine combined theological, philosophical and legal elements into a comprehensive theory of natural law, which was used daily as part of the Catholic practice of confession. The analysis therefore clearly shows that the restitution theory may never have been separated entirely from its religious foundations, but it acquired its concrete form only as an increasingly legally formulated, dogmatically fixed theory of justice. The theory of restitution was therefore paradigmatic for the creation of a theory of moral theology in late scholasticism.

In the third part of his book, the author describes why the theory of restitution as such never entered the secular discourse of natural law and legal scholarship. Theological and not legal reasons were decisive here. The theory of restitution was part of the sacrament of penance. Given the controversies over doctrines of justification, the theory of restitution became practically symbolic for the confessional division of Europe. Prof. Jansen therefore sheds light on a systemically central point of early modern discourses of natural rights and on the difficult question of how European legal scholars of the 17th century handled the intellectual legacy of 16th-century scholasticism.

A luxurious Jewish manuscript appears at the core of a new publication authored by Prof. Dr. Katrin Kogman-Appel, professor of Jewish Studies at the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”. She discusses the decoration of a prayer book, commonly known as the Leipzig Mahzor, and attributes it to the famous Worms rite. “The imagery of medieval prayer books communicates with its viewers in manifold ways,” explains Professor Kogman-Appel, whose field of expertise is the book culture of medieval Jews. At the core of her study are questions about the entangled relationship between Jews and Christians during the late Middle Ages, the complex connections between text and image in medieval book art and Jewish approaches to the image as a medium. The monograph A Mahzor from Worms. Art and Religion in a Medieval Jewish Community was published by Harvard University Press in 2012. Medieval mahzorim were used only for special services in the synagogue and “belonged” to the whole congregation, so their visual imagery reflected the local cultural associations and beliefs. The Leipzig Mahzor pays homage to one of Worms’s most illustrious scholars, Eleazar ben Judah. Its imagery reveals how his Ashkenazi Pietist worldview and involvement in mysticism shaped the community’s religious practice.

The author discusses the visual language of the Leipzig Mahzor from various methodological angles. In addition to decoding its iconography, Kogman-Appel approaches the manuscript as a ritual object that preserved a sense of identity and cohesion within a community facing a wide range of threats to its stability and security.

Prof. Dr. Katrin Kogman-Appel heads project B2-24 of the Cluster of Excellence: From Manuscript to the Printing Press: The Illustrated Book in Jewish Culture (Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries). She is a member of the interconnecting platform F “Transcultural Entanglements” and of the coordinated project group “Figurations of the Religious and the Political”.


After the Bible, the Passover Haggadah is the most widely read classic text in the Jewish tradition. More than four thousand editions have been published since the late fifteenth century, but few are as exquisite as the Washington Haggadah, which resides in the Library of Congress. Now, a stunning facsimile edition meticulously reproduced in full color brings this beautiful, illuminated manuscript to a new generation. Joel ben Simeon, the creator of this unusually well-preserved codex, was among the most gifted and prolific scribe-artists in the history of the Jewish book. David Stern’s introduction reconstructs his professional biography and situates this masterwork within the historical development of the haggadah, tracing the
different forms the text took in the Jewish centers of Europe at the dawn of modernity. Katrin Kogman-Appel shows how ben Simeon, more than just a copyist, was an active agent of cultural exchange. As he traveled between Jewish communities, he brought elements of Ashkenazi haggadah illustration to Italy and returned with stylistic devices acquired during his journeys. In addition to traditional Passover images, realistic illustrations of day-to-day life provide a rare window into the world of late fifteenth-century Europe.


By the triumph of Christendom the cosmos of ancient mythology did not become obsolete, but lived on in the educational traditions. In this context a special kind of discourse developed concerning the infernal realm of the dead. Already in antiquity the mythology scenario with its archaic concepts of afterlife had provoked figurative philosophical or rather psychological patterns of interpretation, which are based especially on the sixth book of Vergil’s Aeneid. Mediated by the late antique comments on the Aeneid this figurative reading was used by Carolingian men of letters to justify their interest in epic and mythological poetry. Subsequent exegetes eventually developed a genuine medieval kind of reading by giving a significance of its own to each component of the mythological infernum. Thus the ancient underworld became much more than just a poetic analogy to the Christian concept of hell, namely a universal topos for the conditio humana. The purpose of the present study is to retrace this development on the basis of poetic and paratextual documents up to its conclusion in Dante’s Commedia.

Macha, Jürgen, Der konfessionelle Faktor in der deutschen Sprachgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit (Religion und Politik, vol. 6), Würzburg: Ergon 2014.

Beginning with the Reformation and far beyond the Enlightenment, the factor ‘confession’ has been enscribed into the collective linguistic ‘household’ of speakers of German. Partly, its effects can even be observed in today’s use of language. This study is the first that undertakes a survey and a classification of historical linguistic phenomena that, in different ways, are related to the interdependency of language and confession in the early modern period. It looks at constancy and change of the autochthonous culture of language under the influence of confession and political rule in different territories. Furthermore, it discusses the effects of confessionality to ritual forms of expression within different confessions. In this context, the book offers contrastive investigations with respect to various types of texts such as inscriptions of bells, epitaphs and funeral speeches. Linguistic confessionals as ‘signa distinctivae’ can be found at different levels of language analysis, as for instance the ‘Lutheran e’ or the ‘Lutheran t’ in ‘predigt’. Finally, the influence of confession on the vernacular is dealt with in the closing chapter.
Secular and ecclesiastical courts without clear jurisdictions determined the jurisdiction of the courts for centuries. The author looks at the old empire with its variety of imperial cities and territories and numerous confessions; thereby, he breaks down principles of common law into sectional fragments. Case files from various territories show what the parties fought for in the overlap of both jurisdictions: colourful cases come together with descriptions of conflicts about appeals, privileges and jurisdictions for whole areas of life. In comparison, intraregional structures for a future history of procedural law become clear. In the intersection of religion, law and politics, the book addresses not only legal historians but also church and regional historians. In its vivid depictions, it provides new insights into major conflicts in the history of the early modern period.

Oestmann, Peter, Geistliche und weltliche Gerichte im Alten Reich. Zuständigkeitsstreitigkeiten und Instanzenzüge (Quellen und Forschungen zur höchsten Gerichtsbarkeit im Alten Reich, vol. 61), Cologne et al.: Böhlau 2012.

With regards to content, it takes into account the oldest domestic and canon traditions as well. Various sources and examples show the practical functionality of law – the reason for the book’s vivid depictions.


Quattrocento humanism saw not just the return of the ancient gods to Latin epic, the most dignified of genres in Latin literature, it often brought them closer to the world of mortal men than they had ever been: Mercenary leaders fighting side by side with Minerva, Renaissance princes stepping up as champions of the Olympic Gods, the forces of Hades obstructing the prosperity of Renaissance states. Beyond doubt, divine machinery had been a key feature of the poets’ antique models and as such it had not only an intrinsic value of imitatio and aemulation, but could also be instrumental in the patrons’ and poets’ pursuit of a political or panegyric agenda, fuelled by hopes that they could renew or imitate the most famous and influential joint-venture between poetry and politics in the history of European literature, the one between Augustus and Vergil, incorporated by the latter’s Aeneid.
However, humanist epic poetry, unlike most of its classical predecessors, chose contemporary history as its favourite subject matters. Treating contemporary events poetically forced the authors to mediate between panegyric requirements, literary appeal and historical veracity. The pagan gods were a foremost instrument for many a poet to tackle this challenge. Camouflaging military or political failures, rearranging constellations of power, signposting or stretching the individual hero’s virtues and victories were chief panegyric techniques required of a court humanist or otherwise politically involved poet that could be achieved by a strategic use of the divine machinery. This book focuses on the various functions pagan mythology and apparatuses of the divine could fulfil as a literary strategy, when authors set out to reconcile contemporary history and epic narrative, putting the pagan gods at the service of Christian heroes.


Drawing on an extended body of historical sources from a bi-confessional region plagued by long and intensive strife between Protestants and Roman Catholics, the study explores the relationship between the formation of confessional churches, religious practice, and conflict. During the sixteenth and seventeenth century religious practice assumed a universalistic nature, irrespective of confessional denomination. Examples include the heightened relevance of doctrinal knowledge disseminated through preaching and catechization, and the gain in importance of the veneration of the Eucharist and Mother Mary, rather than local saints, among Catholics. The increasingly universal character of religious belief and practice implied that it became possible to combine and map conflicts of different kinds situated on different societal levels – from conflicts among neighbours to tensions among great powers – unto a single dyadic contrast. Moreover, the claim to universal truth by both confessional churches suggested a form of conflict resolution by way of eliminating the opponent. Consequently, confessionalization possessed an inherent tendency to aggregate and to escalate conflicts originating in diverse parts of contemporary society. Confessional conflicts faded out mainly for two reasons: First, the development of political theory, which led to the emergence of non-religious foundations of political order based on concepts such as sovereignty and the reason of state, stifled conflict through sheer differentiation between the political and the religious realms. Second, the development of pietism among Protestant churches reduced the relevance of collective elements in religious practice, which reduced the capacity of religious to structure opposing camps in societal conflict.
The French scholar Isaac La Peyrère (1596–1676) is something of an enigma, and has been since his own time. After having left Bordeaux in 1640, the Huguenot La Peyrère entered the service of the Prince of Condé, a Catholic, who remained his patron until his death. He became quite notorious for the works which he published from 1643 onwards. Because of the scandals surrounding his writings La Peyrère has largely been interpreted either as a crypto-Jew or as an early atheist.

The present study investigates him and his work not only in terms of theological history but, for the first time, within the context of the social practices of the European Republic of Letters. La Peyrère’s criticism of the Bible and his striking interest in the Jews can now be newly interpreted in relation to spiritual reading of St Paul and La Peyrère’s relationship to his patron, Prince Condé.

By offering strictly biblical argumentations, mainly centering on Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, La Peyrère presented a religious legitimation of political power. His works are rather ambiguous writings in confessional terms, which highlights the tense relationship between a Huguenot client and his Catholic patron. Looking at him from this perspective, La Peyrère is a highly intriguing case study for the political and religious intersections in the Republic of Letters.

The historians Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger and Andreas Pietsch of the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” have edited a new book on Confessional Ambiguity. The volume, which is published in the series Schriften zur Reformationsgeschichte (Studies on the History of the Reformation) examines confessional ambiguity in the early modern period. Scholars of various disciplines use selected examples to analyse the resistance to, fissures in and limits of confessionalisation. The book is based on an interdisciplinary conference held at the Cluster of Excellence, where historians met and discussed with representatives from literary studies, philology, theology, philosophy, art history and Islamic Studies.

The Europe of the early modern period was a laboratory for political and religious pluralism. Up until now scholarship has primarily described the processes of mutual external exclusion and internal homogenisation of the major confessional churches, which accompanied the creation of territorial states. More recently, on the other hand, resistance, fissures and limits in confessionalisation have been emphasised, as well as the permeability that existed among the confessions. In the meantime, the homogenous con-
fessional community has begun to look like a construct. Confession is described as an often wavering and unstable cultural practice.

The volume looks more closely at one part of this cultural practice: ambiguity and dissimulation. Even in contemporary eyes, dissimulation played a large role in both religious and political fields. The cleverness of the courtier required him to conceal his inner self, and Jesuit theological tracts supplied a complex casuistry which allowed dissimulation in certain cases as a necessary evil.

Nevertheless, confessional ambiguity was considered fundamentally somewhat suspicious. The separation of external action and internal conviction posed the very basic question of to what extent confessional dissimulation was allowed, given internal reservatio mentis. Essentially, it concerned the key question of the relationship between external practice and internal belief, cult and dogma, visible and invisible church, body and soul.


In her book, Prof. Sita Steckel from the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” examines the cultures of teaching in the Early and High Middle Ages. “The scholarly culture of the Latin West before the rise of the universities in the 12th century appears different when you look at it as more than just the pre-history of later scholarly cultures,” Prof. Steckel explained. In her study, she shows how the teachers of the Early and High Middle Ages did not just communicate knowledge, but also religious learning. She thereby locates scholars not in schools, but in ecclesiastical networks. The book has been published under the title, Cultures of Learning in the Early and High Middle Ages. Authority, Concepts of Knowledge and Scholars Networks, in Böhlau Press, Cologne.

Prof. Steckel traces the strategies with which teachers between 800 and 1150 claimed sacralised authority. She thereby compares the ecclesiastically centred knowledge communication of the early medieval Carolingian Empire with the French and German schools of the High Middle Ages. In particular, she looks for new approaches towards the differentiation of knowledge cultures around the year 1000.

One of the best experts of the history of the Holy Roman Empire shines a light on the fascinating interaction between written constitution and the ritually lived constitutional order. For the first time, constitutional history is understood from the perspective of its symbolic and ritual forms and how they changed over time.

How were imperial vassals granted lands? How were agreements reached at imperial assemblies? How did ambassadors interact at princes’ courts? What the constitution said about these affairs was one thing, but whether and to what extent these rules were put into practice was another, dependent on a complex system of ritual behaviour. In this gripping book, Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger shows how a language of political signs, which all the participants mastered and which acted as a basic kind of shared symbolic vocabulary, was indispensable for making agreements about a shared political order.

For many years, scholars have struggled to write the history of the constitution and political structure of the Holy Roman Empire. This book argues that this was because the political and social order could not be understood without considering the rituals and symbols that held the Empire together. What determined the rules (and whether they were followed) depended on complex symbolic-ritual actions. By examining key moments in the political history of the Empire, the author shows that it was a vocabulary of symbols, not the actual written laws, that formed a political language indispensable in maintaining the common order.

“Given the Empire’s multitude of political units, varying in size, structure, and relative position, students and scholars of early modern German history are accustomed to sorting a profusion of names, places, titles, and events. Stollberg-Rilinger makes this difficult task more bearable, not only through her writing – by stating, rather than merely suggesting, the point of each vignette – but also, more importantly, by articulating a “logic” of the Empire’s great constitutional complexity, and its transformation. Her descriptions, here skillfully rendered in Dunlap’s translation, show that legal history can vividly link the ideational and the material.” Law & History Review


On the occasion of the 300th birthday of Empress Maria Theresa (1717–1780), many clichés about one of the most powerful women in history need to be abandoned, according to the latest research. “Maria Theresa embodies a myth that was to remind Austria of lost greatness for a long time, but this spell must be broken today”, says Prof. Dr. Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, historian at the Cluster
of Excellence “Religion and Politics” of Münster University. “The myth describes Maria Theresa as a sovereign of the people’s hearts who loved her children and her subjects, as a heroine who defended justice against power, as a pious regent who strengthened the practice of religion, as a respectable bourgeois ‘housewife of the empire’ who reformed the privileges and stiff ceremony at the royal court, and as the founder of the modern administrative state. However, many of these stereotypes can no longer be supported.” The scholar reveals them to be wrong in the new biography Maria Theresia. Die Kaiserin in ihrer Zeit (Maria Theresa. The Empress in her Times. A Biography) relying on many, partly previously unknown sources. The book has been published by C.H. Beck and was awarded the “Non-Fiction” Prize of the Leipzig Book Fair.

“Maria Theresa was not just the devoted mother of the country, as historians often depicted her”, says Stollberg-Rilinger, whose 1000-page work reflects an entire era and systematically grapples with many contemporary voices. “In fact, the sources present other aspects. She was an extremely self-confident regent, firmly convinced of her dynasty’s divine mission. This conviction, this belief gave her the confidence to hold her ground even in hopeless situations, such as uncompromisingly carrying on a war of succession for years and enforcing reforms. However, it also resulted in the relentlessness with which she treated her own children and the mercilessness with which she persecuted those of a different faith – Protestants and Jews.” In order to protect the “true Catholic religion”, the Habsburg empress had Protestants, “mangy sheep within the Christian flock that was entrusted to her”, re-conditioned in so-called conversion houses or had them deported. When looking at her marriage politics, she sacrificed her children with all the severity of dynastic rationale, fully aware of the fact that some of the marriages constituted, even according to the standards of the time, an unreasonable demand.

For the biography the scholar analysed quite a variety of sources: archival materials of the central authorities, messenger reports and ceremonial descriptions, diaries and travel journals, and above all, correspondence. “The most important sources are Maria Theresa’s letters and handwritten cards. She took care of everything herself and spent day and night at the writing desk”, the historian relates. She emphasises that a biography today can no longer be written from the point of view of an omniscient narrator. Instead the author links analytical and narrative elements and often juxtaposes different points of view. A wide range of contemporaries get a chance to speak: from the enlightened personal physician to the economic project maker, from the English lady in transit to the old aristocratic Lord Chamberlain, from the Prague Jew to the Tyrolese farmer’s son. “Of course we can also hear the voices of Maria Theresa herself and her family members.”

› English edition forthcoming

In the current debate, religious legal systems exclusively carry connotations of conflict; the question of how the German legal system should correctly interact with Islamic Sharia is only one prominent example. On the basis of the canon law of the Eastern National Churches, Fabian Wittreck demonstrates that religious rights can learn from each other, and how. Armenians, Copts as well as Eastern and Western Syrians perpetuated their traditional legal systems during the centuries under Islamic rule and thus include set pieces of Islamic and Jewish religious law, as well as elements of Aristotelian philosophy; the existing sources of the canon law of the imperial church or of Roman legal provenance are thus overlaid and modified. Concrete subjects of investigation are the rules on the prohibition of interest or usury, which are comprehensively depicted and analyzed for the first time in the context of the Eastern Church Law. They can be used to demonstrate how legal regulatory concepts, approaches to justification, and also exceptions are adopted across the boundaries of language and religion. At the same time, it becomes clear that the exchange between these religious rights is restricted to the academic and literary level, since many legal texts do not purport to influence Eastern Christians’ legal practices.
This study focuses on the use of language in Protestant missionary publications. Combining historical and linguistic methods, the author examines the communicative strategies for legitimizing Swedish missions in Africa and Asia around 1900. Focussing on the Swedish missionary organisation “Svenska Missionsförbundet” (The Swedish Missionary Covenant) and their work in the Congo and China, the study explores linguistic patterns and structures which the authors used to produce their knowledge as valid. To convince their readers of the necessity to christianise in regions far away from their land of origin, a community of knowledge was created within the publications. The missionaries were bestowed indisputable authority and the complex circumstances of the colonial situation were presented as simple and straightforward. Thus, the study also reveals the ways in which intersections between Christian religious ideas and colonialist, racist notions of superiority were used to justify missionary activities.

This volume investigates the great divide introduced by modernization theorists between the “rational,” “scientific,” or “modern,” on the one hand, and “irrational,” “ritual,” or “nonmodern,” on the other. But there are places throughout the world where the relationship between modernity, as represented by the legal and medical institutions of the secular state, and traditional forms of healing and justice, is unsettled. The contributors offer ethnographic studies of diverse historical and contemporary relationships between “spirit possession,” healing, and the law. Part I contains case studies of institutions in India, Africa and China that have been subjected to state practices attempting to “purify” law and medicine from traces of religion; in part II, anthropologists analyze contemporary struggles between modernizers and inventive practitioners in India and Kenya; and part III concludes with case studies of social and cultural forms where religion, healing, and law are still integrated. These do not represent a “premodern” past, but rather a concurrent and viable alternative for the organization of collective life.
Icons and murals depicting the biblical scene of the Last Judgment adorned many Eastern-rite churches in medieval and early modern Ukraine. Dating from the twelfth to the eighteenth century, these images were extraordinarily elaborate, composed of dozens of discrete elements reflecting Byzantine, Novgorodian, Moldavian, and Catholic influences, in addition to local and regional traditions. Over time, the details of the iconography evolved in response to changing cultural resources, the conditions of material life at the time, and new trends in mentality and taste. The World to Come lists and describes more than eighty Last Judgment images from present-day Ukraine, eastern Slovakia, and southeastern Poland, making it the largest compilation of its kind. Photographs show overviews and details of the images, and most are printed in full color. The icons and murals provide a valuable source of knowledge about the culture in which they were created: what was meant by good and evil, what was prophesied for the future, and what awaited in the afterlife.

The relationship between the two Christian Churches and the Nazi state with its ideology is one of the most prominent issues of German contemporary history. Books on this topic often dwell too much on details, they are scant overviews, and they usually suffer from a denominational bias depending on the confession of the author. This book undertakes to trace the developments between adaptation or even collaboration on the one hand and resistance on the other. It compares the attitude of the Churches despite their comprehensive separation and despite their distinguished institutional relationship with the Nazi state. While the Roman Catholic Church, the German Christian, and the Confessing Church partly shared common challenges, they also fought against each other.

With the aim of attracting investors from Arab countries, the People's Republic of China purposefully presents itself pro-Islam, according to a study from the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”. Islam is being highlighted as a common ground towards potential Muslim investors. The study Orientalisiert – Kriminalisiert – Propagiert? (Orientalised – Criminalised – Propagandised?) published by Ergon Verlag, which originated under the
direction of Islamic scholar Prof. Dr. Thomas Bauer in the Cluster of Excellence’s Graduate School, closes a research gap as Islam in China has so far barely been investigated from the perspective of Islamic Studies and of Sinology. For the study, Drewes conducted qualitative interviews with Muslims and non-Muslims in Germany, China and Egypt. In addition, she analysed the online editions of the Chinese daily, Renmin ribao (people’s newspaper), which is the official voice of the Communist Party of China, from 2003 to 2011.


Secular Taboos deals with the role of taboos in secular western legal systems and asks for the possibility of a secular justification of intangible legal norms. “The dignity of man shall be inviolable”, proclaims Article 1 of the German Basic Law as well as other international declarations of human rights. So it might seem that even modern secular legal systems are, surprisingly, based on a taboo, here: the taboo of touching the sphere of human dignity. However, a closer look reveals that the concept of taboo, as an archaic and religious rhetorical figure, is not suitable for the justification of general norms in secular societies. Nevertheless, with regard to the task of identifying a common ground of values in the times of terrorism and increased religious plurality, religious patterns of reasoning still enjoy great popularity. But the romanticization of basic legal concepts as the dignity of man produces fatal consequences: By way of sacralizing human dignity, the constitutionally protected core of personal autonomy is turned into an empty formula. Moreover, the sacralized concept of human dignity turns out to be a means of exclusion, which is open to politically motivated exploitation, as long as it is detracted from the requirement of public justification. The essay, therefore, argues for the necessity and the possibility of justifying human dignity as an inviolable right on the basis of secular concepts of legal reasoning.


Fifty years ago, in its declaration on religious freedom at the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church programmatically dispensed with political coercion as a means of enforcing its claim to truth. This “declaration to dispense with coercion” in Dignitatis Humanae is an act of self-imposed restriction with regard to religious claims to truth that is exceptional in the history of religions. It is still extremely difficult to explain even today how such a traditional institution as the Catholic Church could have altered its position so fundamentally. The characteristics, circumstances and dynamics of the path of Catholicism to recognizing religious freedom in all its diversity were the object of research of the project “Dispensing with coercion among religious traditions: modern Catholicism between distinction and integration”, which was carried out in the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” at the
University of Münster. This volume in the series *Catholicism between religious freedom and coercion* (Volume 2) draws on the findings of the previous volumes in the series, which were part of the research project. This volume appears exactly 50 years after the final vote and promulgation of the Declaration on Religious Freedom on 7th December 1965, one day before the end of the Second Vatican Council. It takes stock of the different opinions voiced at this major event in the history of the Church in the 20th century. It also reconstructs the developments before and during the Council that made this decision possible. The volume places the decision in a matrix of contextual factors that together opened a window of opportunity for this turning-point in the relationship of the Church to the liberal state. The aim of the volume is to contribute to a broader and deeper understanding of the learning process undergone by the Catholic Church – a process unexpected in many respects. It is only when learning processes are understood and internalized that they can be deemed irreversible. Whether the analyses tell us something about further steps that need to be taken to change the Catholic Church, or about processes of change in other religious traditions, is a question that only time can answer.


The first synopsis of faith in Germany since 1945, undertaken by contemporary historian Prof. Dr. Thomas Großbölting from Münster University’s Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”, was published in English by Berghahn Books under the title of *Losing Heaven*. In the monograph, which was first released in German under the title of "Der verlorene Himmel" in 2013, the author describes the profound changes that have taken place in the religious landscape in Germany since World War II.

“The birthplace of the Reformation, Germany saw some of the most significant developments in the history of European Christianity”, the historian explains. “Today, however, the country’s religious landscape is such that earlier generations would barely recognise it.” The historical analysis of religious life in Germany describes the road to a society that has changed profoundly today: “Christian parishes are diminishing, private piety is decreasing and public life has almost entirely lost its Christian character. However, a flourishing market of syncretistic and individualistic forms of ‘popular religions’ remains.” The book *Losing Heaven* retraces the dramatic changes and explains their consequences for religious communities in Germany today and for the community as a whole.

According to the study, about two thirds of the German population today are still members of a Christian church. Around 1950, this number amounted to 95 per cent. Participation in church life is continually on the decline.
“Christianity has become one provider among many for the endowment of meaning and for the organisation of Sundays.”

“There is no Christian Germany any more”, Prof. Großbölting emphasises. “However, the number of religious political conflicts is rising.” Politics and the churches in Germany still remain in the 1950s. “Based on the postwar model, the Christian churches are still favoured by the state, even though a large number of religions has been added”, according to Großbölting. A farsighted kind of politics that treats all religious communities equally is not in sight. “Instead there is the system of an imperfect separation of church and state that developed in the postwar period”, says Großbölting. “Much of it remains to this day: church tax, religious education at state schools or the seat of church representatives in broadcasting committees.” The rights and demands of people of different faith and of the growing group of irreligious people, however, go by the board. Islam in particular is hitting a “glass ceiling”.

According to the scholar, the close cooperation between state and church is rooted in the 1949 Basic Constitutional Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, which adopted essential regulations from Germany’s 1919 Weimar Constitution. “At a time when society was predominantly Christian in character and when an ideational fresh start after National Socialism was sought, this conjunction worked perfectly well for politics and the churches.” In the 1950s, the churches provided ideals and ways of life for many areas such as family, sexuality, education, but also for political projects. “What was then considered a moral benchmark was no more than one position among many two decades later.”

In his detailed study, the historian portrays the religious change in the former Federal Republic, in the GDR and in re-united Germany. He draws a line from the ideal of re-Christianisation after 1945, through conflicts regarding sex, family and authority as well as the church crisis in the 1960s, to the pluralisation starting in the 1970s and the special case of East Germany and on to the growth of Islam and Judaism in Germany. The scholar analyses three factors in particular: practiced religiosity; the relationship of religion and society; and the change within the churches, for example, with a view to theology and church congresses.

The 2013 book presents the results of project C22 at the Cluster of Excellence: Transcendental bestowment of meaning and religious collectivisation in postmodern Europe. The author is professor of Modern and Contemporary History at the History Department of Münster University. At the Cluster of Excellence, he is currently head of Project C2-8: New social movements and religious social forms after modernity: a comparison of Germany and North America.

The legal scholar and historian of modern constitutional law Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde (born in 1930) has provided important impulses for an appropriate understanding of the relationship between religion and politics in the modern constitutional state. He undoubtedly belongs to the great public intellectuals in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany. His famous dictum that the "free, secularized state lives by prerequisites which it cannot guarantee itself" expresses like no other sentence the fragile existence of modern democracies. But also his early works on modern constitutional history, on the role of German Catholicism in 1933 and on the Second Vatican Council are still today a source of reflection.

"Catholic Action" (Actio Catholica) was a worldwide lay-apostolic campaign of the Popes Pius XI (1922–1939) and Pius XII (1939–1958) for the "Christianization of the world". The so-called "plague of laicism" was to be counterbalanced by an active commitment of lay Catholics in the largely secularized societies of the 20th century. The program, which was rather antimodern in its origins, aimed at a "fundamental-political" penetration of society: The faithful were to be mobilized for the public interests of the Church by special training and public campaigns. Meetings, petitions, and leaflet campaigns were among the means of Catholic Action, as did liturgical ceremonies and spiritual retreats. Those who embraced the cause of Catholic Action were part of an ecclesiastical laity elite: so there was hardly a Catholic leadership personality, who did not focus on the ideas of the Catholic Action. In the years following the Second World War, however, the all too narrow framework of the Catholic Action was increasingly questioned and more than before the Christians’ "maturity" in worldly affairs was emphasized. The importance of Catholic Action for German lay Catholicism in the 20th century has long been underestimated. For the first time, the study shows how deep also German Catholics between the Weimar Republic and the early Federal Republic were marked by its ideas: The faithful observed with great interest the attempts at implementation of the papal program in Italy and France; at the same time, they
reflected their own experiences in the Church and the society within the framework of Catholic Action. In Germany, too, Actio Catholica was the central arena, on which the Catholic layperson assumed its "modern" form. The study provides a comprehensive account of this central "dispositive" of European lay Catholicism in the 20th century.

An edited volume from the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” examines the relationship between religion and politics in modern philosophy and in systemic legal questions today. The volume, *From the Religious to the Secular Legitimation of State Norms*, is edited by the legal scholar Prof. Thomas Gutmann and the philosophers Prof. Ludwig Siep and Dr Michael Städtler from the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”, as well as by Dr Bernhard Jakl from the Department of Civil Law, Philosophy of Law and Medical Law of the University of Münster. The volume originated in the similarly titled conference at the Cluster in October 2009 and has been published by Mohr Siebeck Press in Tübingen.

The modern legal state claims to treat its citizens in an undifferentiated manner as free and equal persons, the editors explain. Because of this claim, the legitimation of state norms excludes particularistic ethical concepts just as much as it does arbitrariness or special privileges. The modern state claims to pass laws generally without consideration of arbitrariness or individual interests. But that raises a specific question regarding the state’s relationship to the great religions, which on the one hand make their own claims to universal validity and on the other are, as historically contingent revelations, themselves particularistic. According to the editors, the claim to be a legal state requires, that its norms be neutral and secular. This leads to the philosophically central question: can the basic, common characteristics of humanity such as reason, be applied normatively without resorting to specific cultural experiences? A further question asks how these norms relate to traditional particularistic behaviour.

In their contributions, philosophers and legal scholars examine the relationship of religion and politics against the background of the modern legal state, from which a series of philosophical-historical and legal problems emerge. Starting from their own respective disciplines, the authors open up an interdisciplinary discussion. The link of the contributions therefore becomes the relationship between elements of natural law, culture and positive law in the legitimation of state norms on the one hand, and the justification of subjective rights such as human rights on the other.
Since September 11, 2001 at the latest, public attention has focused on religion and violence. Time and again throughout the 20th century, the Catholic Church has taken a stand on the issue of violence in word and deed, e.g. during the civil wars in Spain and Mexico as well as with its behaviour towards the Soviet regime, Italian fascism, the Nazi dictatorship and South American military dictatorships. But liberation theologians also discussed the use of violence to fight structural injustice. In this volume, renowned historians and theologians from Latin America and Europe draw on newly available sources to show how different groups within the Catholic Church responded to the exercise of violence and the people behind it, and how they legitimized or delegitimized violence. Furthermore, the question of whether the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) marked a turning point is discussed.

The current debate on (allegedly Islamic) „parallel justice“ raises the question of the adequate status or relevance of religious law in the German constitutional order. While formalized arbitration based on religious law is barely debated in Germany at all, there exists a comprehensive practice of religious arbitration (as well as a lively discussion) in common law countries. In the first German study on the topic, Franziska Hötte illustrates the factual and legal position of religious arbitration in the United States, Canada and Great Britain. She highlights the relevant debates (namely the bitter „Sharia Controversy“ in Ontario and the public reactions to the proposals of the Archbishop of Canterbury). Furthermore, the study analyses the mode of function of religious arbitration institutions like the British „Muslim arbitration tribunal“ as well as their rules of procedure and their interplay with secular institutions. Namely the execution of the findings of the religious institutions raises substantial problems in consideration of constitutional law (namely human rights). Finally, the study explores the legal situation in Germany and asks whether religious arbitration would be permissible and reasonable under the Basic Law.


Focusing on the six decades that German Moravian missionaries worked in the British colony of Victoria, Australia, this book enriches understanding of colonial politics and the role of the non-British other in manipulating practice and policy in foreign realms. Central to the transnational nature of the book are questions of identity and of how individuals and the organisations they worked for, can be seen as both colluders and opposers within nation-state borders and politics. It analyses the ways in which the Moravian missionaries navigated competing agendas within the colonial setting, especially those that impacted on their sense of personal vocation, their practices of conversion, and their understandings of the indigenous non-Christian peoples in the settler society of Victoria.


Given widespread anti-Muslim discriminations in the West, the need for critical research on media portrayals of Islam is beyond dispute. However, this book argues that in order to deepen our understanding of Islam in the media, we have to review some of the terminology, theoretical assumptions, and methods that are prevalent in the research field and find alternative approaches that go beyond one-dimensional concepts like ‘stereotyping’ and ‘bias’. A first problem is oversimplification. Through their terminology (‘Islamophobia’, ‘Feindbild Islam’) many studies imply that media reporting on Islam was of an entirely negative and hostile character. This notion is easily rejected in view of the fact that a lot of media reports actually revolve around the problem of Muslim discrimination or take issue with states withholding Muslim minority rights. Second, many researchers take for granted that the media base their representations of Islam on a simple and dichotomous structure (Islam/West) and therefore fail to acknowledge the many complexities, ambiguities, and contradictions that constitute the discourse. Third, a common proposition given by researchers is that the media should include more ‘positive’ reports on Islam in order to counter the bulk of ‘negative’ news. This proposition ignores that negativity is a basic news value not specific to reporting on Islam. Besides, the distinction between ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ reports runs the risk of creating highly problematic categories like ‘the good Muslim’ and ‘the bad Muslim’. In Mediendiskurs Islam, Tim Karis puts forward an approach that is designed to bring research on media representations of Islam closer to the wider theoretical discussion that goes on in the field of research on religion, media, and culture. Taking its cues from the Cultural Studies School, this approach focuses on media narratives rather than stereotypes. In a long-term study of coverage on Islam in the German TV news magazine “Tagesthemen”, a number of Islam-narratives that constituted the discourse in the time period of 1979–2010. As the author points out, it is possible to deal with the complexities of media discourses whilst maintaining a critical position towards reporting.
Not least of all, the terror by IS-militia shows us a religion, which seems to fall out of a bygone time. An Islam, which is misused to justify claims to power and to portray an inhumane action as desired by God. Does this have anything to do with Islam at all? Mouhanad Khorchide says yes. And it should be reason not least for Muslims to face the question: What is going wrong in Islam? The root of such excesses lies in an understanding of Islam in which God alone turns around himself. Toward such an opinion, Mouhanad Khorchide counters the concept of an Islamic humanism, which postulates a God who believes in mankind and appreciates his human existence. He ventures nothing less than a new outline of a self-understanding of Islam. His proposition is: We need a global humanism, which acknowledges mankind as a global family. In recognizing its own potentials, Islam can make a crucial contribution to that end. Mouhanad Khorchide draws attention to the one God who takes human seriously in his freedom. A book, which portrays Islam as a modern and prevailing religion: as an essential source of a global humanism.

A modern reading of Islam, which systematically unfolds divine love and mercy as a theological concept beyond legalistic religion, lies at the heart of the recent publication by Mouhanad Khorchide, member of the Cluster of Excellence "Religion and Politics". In an easily understandable way, the author presents a theology of mercy as a viable alternative to a theology of obedience and fear, as is widely spread in the Islamic world. He considers Islam first and foremost as a message of mercy. The divine attribute used most frequently in the Qur’an to describe God is mercy. Mouhanad Khorchide, who addresses the problems of modern Qur’anic hermeneutics and contemporary readings of Islam, explains: "It is astonishing that this God, the all-merciful, is barely paid attention to by Islamic theology and popular belief. [...] Thus, in favour of a contemporary reading of the Qur’an, it is imperative not only to bear in mind the historical contexts of revelation, but also to develop theological criteria which could serve as guidelines and standards in dealing with the Qur’an.” Therefore, the main theme of his recent publication is the unfolding of a theology of mercy, which aims at identifying the relationship between God and mankind as a relationship of dialogic freedom, in which God attempts to attract mankind only by means of love: [...] people He loves and who love Him, [...] (Q 5:54). The acceptance of this divine love, however, is an autonomous ‘yes’ towards His love, hence a ‘yes’ in freedom. Respecting the self-determination of the human being as an essential element of his free will, would also
necessarily mean that Islamic Theology can only be rationally organised if it likewise reflects the free will of man. The book addresses the fundamental question of how to consequently explicate Islam in light of the Qur’an’s own claim, namely to be a revelation of God’s mercy. The category of mercy therefore serves as a sort of hermeneutical key by which systemic questions of creation, revelation, God’s actions, eschatology etc. are discussed.


The book explores the recent state and development of churchliness and religiosity from three perspectives (decline, individualization, and (re)vitalization) and according to three theoretical approaches (secularization theory, individualization thesis, and supply-side model of religious competition). The main questions which are addressed are: What was the situation concerning churchliness and religiosity immediately after the breakdown of communism, and how has it developed during the following two decades? What patterns of religious change can be observed? How can the patterns and differences be explained? The empirical part of the book contains results from micro and macro analyses of a core of 18 countries, which can be classified according to their dominant religious tradition: Catholic – Poland, Slovakia, Croatia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Hungary, Czech Republic; Protestant – Latvia, Estonia, East Germany; Orthodox – Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine; Muslim – Bosnia, Albania. The findings are drawn primarily from various international population surveys (EVS/WVS; ISSP; ESS; Aufbruch; PCE 2000), but also from other religious and structural data. The central results can be summarized as follows: overall, in terms of change in the religious sphere, no homogenous pattern can be established for the whole region. While most Orthodox societies have experienced a clear religious growth, the situation in Catholic and Protestant countries has been very varied. Indeed, in countries such as the Czech Republic and East Germany, the process of secularization since the political upheavals in the early 1990s seems to be even more advanced. As far as the ability of the theoretical models to explain religious change is concerned, there is no evidence to support the theory of religious competition. In contrast, the individualization thesis can certainly claim a degree of plausibility for itself, although some findings do contradict its assumptions. All in all, a context-sensitive secularization-theory approach, one which looks at specific cultural and political developments, seems best able to explain developments in the field of religion in Central and Eastern Europe.
In many premodern Islamic societies, religious endowments were a central element of socio-economic structure. Endowment practice typically reflected notions of social order: Rulers and elites used endowments to fulfil what they considered their obligation towards social welfare, but also to create dependency, to represent power and to foster bonds of solidarity within kinship and occupational groups. It is precisely for this quality of reflecting and reproducing notions of social order that endowments became a central point of conflict under colonial rule. British officials profoundly disagreed with the traditional ways of administering endowed resources. At its heart, this conflict was a clash of opposing views about how socio-economic responsibilities should be allocated within society and which obligations the state, families and other institutions should assume in order to safeguard social welfare. In the Sultanate of Zanzibar, this conflict ended in a massive colonial intervention which profoundly changed the predominant patterns of local endowment practice. The study presents a detailed analysis of this transformation, based on extensive research of archival sources.


The role of religion and the church in modern societies is the focus of the book, Religion and Social Differentiation, by Prof. Detlef Pollack, sociologist of religion at the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”. “This role has fundamentally changed. In the Middle Ages, Christianity was the foundation of the entire social order. In modern societies, in contrast, religion and church have become only one element among many”, Prof. Pollack explains. “They have to compete against the attraction of secular alternatives.” The book, Religion and Social Differentiation. Studies on Religious Change in Europe and the USA has been published by Mohr Siebeck Press in Tübingen.

In the book, Pollack describes how the social role of religion has changed throughout history. The transition to modernity thus took place at the end of the 18th century. “From that point, church and religion have been caught up in a process of social differentiation, which they can scarcely control to any lasting degree”, Pollack explains. In his sociological analysis of this history, he traces religiously determined precursors of functional differentiation in the Middle Ages, but goes on to examine the religious transformation at the end of the 18th century and the religious crises of the 1960s.

The book concentrates on questions on religion and society in Europe, but also looks at the contemporary situation in the U.S. and Latin America. “Even in the U.S., which is often cited as a counter-example against the vali-
dity of differentiation theory, we can see clear tendencies towards secularisation. Religious pluralisation does not prevent these tendencies, but on the contrary, strengthens them.” According to Prof. Pollack, religion and modernity are in powerful tension with one another. “Nevertheless, even in highly differentiated, pluralised societies, religious communities fulfil socially integrative functions.”


Religion is back on the political agenda of Western societies, which is why more and more social scientists have abandoned secularization theories which treat religion and modernity as contradictory and assume the decreasing importance of religion in modern societies. Detlef Pollack questions whether and to what extent it is justified to give up the classical secularization theory. He asks which alternative models of accounting for the religious changes in modern societies are available and undertakes first steps in order to test the validity of conventional and alternative theoretical models empirically. In doing so, he focuses on the religious and ecclesiastical developments in Germany since 1945, but takes into consideration religious changes in Western and Eastern Europe as well. Special emphasis is placed on religious changes within German Protestantism in the West and the East.


How do the people in Europe look at non-Christian religions and religious communities? Under which conditions are religious pluralism as well as the members of various religious groups accepted respectively rejected? What are the individual and contextual factors that influence the willingness to religious tolerance and appreciation? These are some of the questions the present volume addresses on the basis of comparative analyses in five European countries.

Content:
- Perception and acceptance of religious diversity
- Germany’s pleading for the unequal treatment of religious communities
- The socio-structural profile of Muslims in Germany in comparison with Europe
- Between acceptance and refusal: reflections on a model of religious tolerance

This is not a book that provides a new integrated theory of religious change in modern societies, but one which develops some theoretical elements suited to make some of the contemporary religious alterations understood. Most of the approaches in sociology of religion are prone to emphasize either processes of religious decline or of religious upswing. The secularization theory, for example, might include a couple of relevant factors such as functional differentiation, economic affluence or social equality in order to account for religious change. But the result of its empirical analyses seems to be certain in advance, namely that the social relevance of religion is decreasing. In contrast, the model of the religious market devised by sociologists of religion in the U.S. is inclined to detect processes of religious upsurge everywhere. This book tries to avoid a purely theoretically guided perspective on the phenomena. That’s why it does not start with theoretical propositions but with questions which of course are theoretically framed. The book raises the question of how the social significance of religion in its various facets has changed in modern societies and wants to explain which factors and conditions have contributed to these changes. In order to answer these questions, it carries out several case studies (including those from Western and Eastern Europe, South Korea, U.S.) which constitute the bulk of the text. Only after having done the empirical case studies does it offer some generalizing theoretical conclusions relying on the insights gained in the empirical studies and proposing determining factors and overarching patterns lying behind the religious changes in modern societies. To this extent, the book does not come up with an all-encompassing coherent model like secularization theory or the market model but with an empirically based multi-paradigmatic perspective.

It combines empirical analysis and theoretical considerations. Its character is both descriptive and explanatory. It does not only comprise case studies, but also international comparisons. It mainly uses representative population surveys like the World Value Survey, the International Social Survey Program or the Religion Monitor as well as surveys conducted by the authors themselves. At the same time it integrates historical analyses going back to the 19th century.


Engaging with some of the central issues in the sociology of religion, this volume investigates the role and significance of churches and religion in contemporary Western and Eastern Europe. Based on an extensive international research project, it provides case studies of various
countries (including Finland, Ireland, Portugal, Germany, Poland, Russia, Estonia, Hungary and Croatia), as well as cross-national comparisons. Researching more precisely the current social relevance of church and religion at different levels, *The Social Significance of Religion in the Enlarged Europe* raises and responds to both descriptive and explanatory questions: Can we observe tendencies of religious decline in the various Western and Eastern European countries? Are we witnessing trends of religious individualization? To what extent has there been a religious upswing in the last few years? And what are the factors causing those processes of religious change that can be observed? The book is characterised by its broad range of data and a coherent conceptual framework, whereby each chapter assesses the extent to which three important theoretical approaches in the sociology of religion – secularization theory, the market model of religion, and the individualization thesis – are applicable to the data. It will be of interest to all scholars of sociology, politics and religion who explore religious trends and attitudes in contemporary Europe.


Society and politics in Saudi Arabia are based on the close relationship between political rulership and an exclusivist reading of Islam, generally referred to as "Wahhabism". Up to the late 1990s, the ruling family of Al Saud was propagating a vision of national identity that was highly focused on the "community of common destiny" of the Royal Family and its subjects on the one hand, and the "Saudi-Wahhabi Umma" as an outstanding characteristic of righteousness within the (Muslim) world on the other. This vision, however, led to the labelling of non-Wahhabi Muslims as false-believers, resulting in the marginalization of minority groups – first and foremost the Saudi Shia – inside the kingdom itself. The study is examining the intellectual and religious discourse on religious – foremost inner-Islamic – plurality in the framework of the Saudi "Center for National Dialogue". Starting with a description of the political implications of the Wahhabi religious reform program from its very beginning, and the development of political and social reform discourse in the 1980s and 1990s, the study offers an in-depth analysis of the National Dialogue Meetings. Moreover, it offers insights into the thoughts of six Saudi religious and intellectual thinkers, both of Sunni and of Shia origin. In addition to the high number of documents and media coverage, that were being used as data-base, the author was able to interview highly influential figures of Saudi social and political discourse of the last 30 years or so, amongst others Salman bin Fahd al-Awda and Zaki al-Milad. The study shows that Saudi discourse holds a number of innovative and critical positions and concepts concerning the established view on religious others as well as on national identity. It provides deep insights into the lively Saudi debates on citizenship and dialogue, rarely presented to a non-Saudi audience.

Even today the Philosophy of Spirit remains one of the most vigorously discussed aspects of Hegel’s system. The theoretical potential of its answers to the challenges of modernity, however, is far from having been exhausted. In his book, Die Wirklichkeit des Geistes. Studien zu Hegel, Michael Quante, Professor of Philosophy at the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”, analyses the fundamental principles and central theses of Hegel’s Philosophy of Spirit in light of current discussions in European and Anglo-American philosophy. His discussion centres on the Phenomenology of Spirit and the Elements of the Philosophy of Right. In these two works Hegel developed the central ideas of his practical philosophy (for example, Action, Personhood, and Will) and explored the ways in which ethical norms and social institutions could be accounted for between the poles of individual autonomy and social embeddedness.


A new study by the Religious Studies scholar Dr Astrid Reuter, from the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”, examines legal conflicts over religion in Germany and the public controversies about them. In her book, Religion in a Juridified Society: Legal Conflicts and Public Controversies over Religion as Boundary Work in the Religious Field, she looks at selected recent legal conflicts and public controversies over religion in Germany and interprets them as, “political conflicts over defining the borders of the religious field.” Examples include the conflict over crucifixes in Bavarian schools, head-covering for female Muslim teachers and the introduction of ethics classes in Berlin and Brandenburg. The book has been published by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Press, Göttingen.

“Human rights have increased in importance worldwide since the second half of the twentieth century,” Dr Reuter explains. For this reason law has become an increasingly important factor in the religious field. The human right to freedom of religion is increasingly made claim to, but according to Dr Reuter, this poses a dilemma: “Freedom of religion can only be given to those who have a religion. But what is religion? And who has the right to define religion?” Dr Reuter argues that these questions supply the backdrop to numerous conflicts and public controversies over religion. “In legal conflicts over religion, the basic
human right to freedom of religion can only be granted when judges decide on what is meant as a religion by this right. But by doing so they become participants in the conflicts over the borders of the religious field,” Dr Reuter explains, “They intervene in the right of religion to define itself and therefore into the freedom of religion.”

The study consists of Dr Reuter’s postdoctoral degree thesis (Habilitationsschrift), which she completed as part of the Cluster research project, C23: Religion in Juridified Society. Legal Conflicts and Public Controversy about Religion in Germany in International Comparison.


To provide for law and peace by means of the threat and exercise of power is – according to Protestant doctrine – one of the tasks of the state, which must be fulfilled autonomously but ethically. At the beginning of the 21st century the lines of conflict between law and justice, war and peace, religion and politics have intensified. They are the subject of controversial debates, which point to basic problems of political ethics. The contributions of this volume analyze the traditions of the Protestant understanding of law and justice, war and peace, and develop the model of a just peace based on the idea of human rights. Furthermore, they are concerned with disputed issues such as a legitimate use of military force, but also a liberal legal order of the relationship between state and religion.

How does the liberal constitutional state deal with heavy criticism of religion in public and with its impact? Are there legal possibilities or even duties to solve the problems related? As far as German constitutional law is concerned, the theory of a conflict of fundamental rights is predominant to describe the legal constellation. The person that heavily criticizes religious ideas or insults religious adherents invokes his or her fundamental subjective right to freedom of expression. On the other hand, people who feel insulted and marginalized by heavy criticism refer to the fundamental right to freedom of religion. Based on that, they ask the state – the authorities, courts or parliament – for assistance or even intervention. The study examines the content of the fundamental subjective rights to freedom of expression and freedom of religion as well as their specific effects. This analysis challenges the viability of the theory of a conflict of rights. Furthermore, it provides the basis for an evaluation of the law already in effect. In this sphere, special attention is turned to German criminal law where the insult of religious ideas is only punished as far as it is suitable to disturb public or social peace. At this point, it becomes evident that heavy criticism of religious ideas and insult of religious adherents evokes serious dangers for the principle of monopolization of violence on behalf of the state and also for integration. Due to this connection the study also focuses on the existence and the content of objective constitutional principles which might restrict the speaker’s right to freedom of expression.
Sukuk is a securitised capital markets instrument in the field of Islamic Finance which is also gaining attention in Europe. One of the major reasons behind the emergence of Sukuk as an alternative to interest based debt instruments is the prohibition of interest and speculation in Islamic law as well as the principle of profit and loss sharing. Sukuk can be used for corporate, project or real estate finance purposes. The product variety ranges from simple bond-like structures to complex structured instruments. Based on the most common Sukuk types, the legal and regulatory framework for Sukuk issuances under German law is analysed in the thesis. Sukuk has been developed by international legal and market practice involving various legal subject matters. Therefore, capital markets, contractual and insolvency law issues are scrutinised taking a comparative law approach.

The book *In der Gesellschaft des Autors* by Matthias Schaffrick explores religious and political dimensions of authorship. Authorship, i.e. writing and publishing texts, is understood as a strategy of self-authorisation. Starting from this assumption Schaffrick analyses the characteristic of these strategies in texts by the German author Martin Mosebach, the former German chancellor Helmut Schmidt and the theologian Joseph Ratzinger and later Pope Benedict XVI. Doing so, the book asks from a philological point of view, how their religious and political representations of authorship fit into the image of a secular or post-secular society. Schaffrick concludes that – according to the famous Böckenförde-dilemma – authorship is part of the social prerequisites which the state cannot guarantee itself. In contrast to Michel Foucault, who focuses on the relation between author and text in his seminal reflections on the question of “What is an Author”, Schaffrick argues for the social – not only literary, but also religious and political – impact of authorship.

The Protestant theologian and social ethicist, Prof. Arnulf von Scheliha of the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” has provided the first comprehensive description in sixty years of political ethics in German Protestantism, from the Reformation to the present. On this basis, Prof. Scheliha develops a systematic doctrine of principles and examines contemporary issues of political ethics.

Working from a concept of politics rooted in action theory, in the historical section of the book he presents the history of political ethics from the Reformation to the Evangelical Church in Germany’s 1985 memorandum on democracy. “A focus of the book is the change in the understanding of the state, which required adapting the Reformation doctrine of the two ways of God’s reign,” the scholar explains. He grants particular importance to the contributions of theological liberalism and the Enlightenment, as represented by thinkers such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, Richard Rothe and Ernst Troeltsch. “They contributed decisively to solving the philosophical problems that this change posed.”

The social ethicist develops a systematic doctrine of principles as it relates to the present, and reveals how the concept of Christian freedom leads to a theory of duties, goods and virtue. “The interpretation of freedom as an ethical duty can be divided into various dimensions: human dignity, culture, responsibility, and justice,” Prof. Scheliha explains. At the centre of his discussion lie civil society, democracy and a concept of justice interpreted in procedural-ethical terms. To explain his ethical doctrine of virtue, the theologian develops a concept of Christian responsibility and discusses its significance for political action in a civil society and in the modern multi-level state. In the final section, the author deals with crucial topics in the present political discourse and substantiates the scope of the approach with examples such as ‘Ostracism of Violence and Creation of a Just Peace’, ‘Europe’ and ‘Good Governance’.


In this expanded version of his 2015 Gifford Lectures, Perry Schmidt-Leukel argues that “religious pluralism” finds its natural outcome in the prospect of doing theology inter-religiously. “Religious pluralism” refers to an attitude with recognizes that other religions constitute different but nevertheless equally valid and often complementary paths of salvation or liberation. This view has significant political implications in as much as religious claims to their exclusive or superior truth are often at the bottom of the potential for interreligious conflicts. The book presents and discusses the development of pluralist positions within Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Chinese Religions. With the acknowledgment of the religious other’s equal validity theological reflection can no longer be exclusively based on one’s own religious tradition but needs to be practiced inter-religiously. The book argues and demonstrates how this objective is supported by what
the author identifies as a "fractal" structure of religious diversity, that is, major differences and distinctions between the religious reappear at the level of intra-religious diversity. Thus, inter-religious theology is continuous with intra-religious ecumenical theology. Religions are neither all the same, nor are they radically different. They resemble each other precisely in their inner diversity – an insight which might become the basis of all future theology.

A German and a Chinese translation are at planning stage.


The contemporary encounter between different religions which is increasingly taking place both at a global and local level creates new challenges to each one among them. On the one hand a growing potential of interreligious tension and conflict can be observed, on the other hand there is an intensifying process of religious interpenetration and transformation. The first part of the book focusses on various facets of this complex situation. It discusses the religious roots of interreligious conflicts, the need for interreligious tolerance (in the sense of toleration) but also its difference from possible interreligious appreciation. It considers interreligious interpenetration with respect to the phenomenon of multi-religious hybrid identities, syncretistic developments and comparative, interreligious theology.

The second part of the book specifies some of these more general aspect with regard to the transformation of Christian self-understanding in the course of its encounter with Buddhism. The epilogue of the book argues for the possibility and need to study religious transformation processes with a religious interest.


The contributions to this volume analyze the intertextual and social contexts of authorship. Along these lines, authorship is conceptualized not as origin but as effect of literary works. The chapters show how authorship is generated between the conflicting poles of religion and politics. As various literary works exemplify: religious and political semantics legitimate authorship from antiquity to modernity. The contributions focus on literature of the 20th and 21st century and ask if and how we can differentiate between religious and political aspects of authorship. After an introduction by the editors, Christian Sieg’s contribution draws attention to the immediate postwar era where political authorship draws on the critique of religion and the provocative identification with nihilism. Subsequently, Philipp Pabst shows how in the 1950s the very attempt to criminalize Arno Schmidt’s literary texts as blasphemy urged the author to adopt a model of authorship which
aimed at the provocation of religious and political conservatives. In his contribution, Christoph Pflaumbaum points to a text by Wolfgang Hildesheimer which at the peak of the student revolution in 1968 turns away from politics to religion and uses religious exercises as a medium to reflect authorship. Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf analyzes the religious dimension of Peter Handke’s texts on Yugoslavia which created political scandals in the 1990s. Matthias Schaffrick then shows how an essay by Carl Schmitt helps to understand Martin Mosebach’s authorship. In particular, Mosebach’s novel Das Beben (2005) discusses political theology. Innokentij Kreknin reads Christian Kracht’s novels as instances of aesthetic fundamentalism which determines his authorship as well. Kracht, the contribution argues, constructs the author as an aesthetic object and thereby detaches him from the political realm. The last two contributions widen the focus of the volume and take British as well as American authors into account. Florian Kläger scrutinizes the ways in which Martin Amis comments on the return of religion after 9/11. Amis, he argues, pits the dialogic nature of the novel against religious fundamentalism. Anna Thiemann finally reads Jonathan Franzen’s novels The Corrections (2001) and Freedom (2010) against the backdrop of the American civil religion (Robert Bellah) and shows how the tensions between politics and religion unfold in these works.


Der Staat als irdischer Gott (The state as a worldly God) is the title of a newly published work by philosopher Prof. Dr. Ludwig Siep of the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”. Religious and secular positions quarrel about a religious fundament for the state in order to limit its claims to ultimate authority. The genesis of this “absolute” claim has a long history in modern age political philosophy, culminating with Hegel. The conception aims at liberating the state both from religion and economic interests. But the very human rights which the state claims to protect against these “competitors” are endangered by limitless state sovereignty. Consequences from this development can be drawn in contemporary discussions about the “return of religion”. The secular state remains necessary for the protection of basic rights. But it can refrain from any “civil-religious” aura if religions engage for human rights and accept the neutral state. To restrict the power of the global economy, on the other hand, states have to renounce part of their sovereignty for international organisations – without producing “failed states”, however.

Shaping religious pluralism is a pivotal task in contemporary societies. The challenges involved become particularly apparent in societies in transition. As an example of this, Simone Sinn studies religious pluralism in Indonesia, a country in which after Suharto’s resignation in 1998 religio-political issues were discussed exhaustively in public. The study’s approach from the perspective of discourse analysis shows the interpretive patterns and narratives in Islam and Christianity which have a formative influence on the understanding of religious pluralism in Indonesia. The systematic-theological reflection deals with core questions of political ethics and of the theology of religions. It identifies the experience of vulnerability as a central challenge in religious pluralism and provides a theological discussion of the appropriate understanding of human beings’ agency.


The concept of the “secular state” is the classic response of Western political thinking to religious diversity as a challenge to modern societies. The actual meaning of this general formula, however, has become the subject of a controversial debate in political theory. The book addresses the question about the implications of secularism as a state principle for the role of religious arguments in the public sphere. Liberal theories of public reason, which take an exclusionary stance towards religion, are discussed critically with regard to their premises and the whole background understanding of modernity from which they spring. Closely considering Charles Taylor’s writings on secularism and modernity, the book discusses what the notion of the “secular state” implies for the handling of religious arguments (and symbols) in the public sphere.


There is no end to the discussion about Hitler. More than sixty-five years after the end of the Nazi regime Hitler and his National Socialism still remain explosive issues. Every generation poses similar questions: How was Hitler’s rise possible? How could Hitler and National
Socialism, both responsible for war, crimes and genocide, count on widespread acceptance by German society until the very end? Why were so many Germans willing to align their conduct with the „Führer“ and thus actively support the Nazi dictatorship?

This volume, based on the first historical exhibition focusing on Hitler, seeks answers to these questions by examining not only the phenomenon of Hitler’s power, but also German society. Leading international researchers analyse the mechanisms of Nazi rule, as well as the aesthetics of Nazi policy and of Nazi national community, the function of Nazism as a political religion as well as the development of Nazi terror.


Based on the Recommendations of the German Council of Science and Humanities on the “Further development of the theologies and sciences concerned with religions” of January 2010 the book takes up the suggestion to establish “Advisory Boards for Islamic Studies” which could be entrusted with the task of ensuring the constitutionally required cooperation of Muslim communities. The authors of the book develop and comment on a model regulation which may be used by decision makers in Universities and at the political level when establishing Institutes for Islamic Studies. It is also meant as a contribution to the ongoing debate on how to integrate Islam under the German constitution.


Rapid developments in the life sciences have recently sparked increasing debates regarding alterations of human nature. This process, the very effects of which seem to endanger this nature itself, has reached new levels by not only allowing for therapeutic treatments, but also providing for the improvement of our genetic dispositions. Because these developments hold such tremendous importance regarding the collective identity, self-understanding and self-perception of humankind, they have triggered an ever-growing number of ethical, political and legal debates, all of which reveal far-reaching controversies. The author discusses the current legal permissibility of procedures aiming at improving the human genome and analyzes options for future legal ruling taking into account various, not only legal, aspects. She raises the question of which sources suffice to justify a legal prohibition of techniques of genetic enhancement, i.e. whether an indisposability of the natural and contingent human genome can be justified in a secular, religiously neutral and constitutional legal system, or if such an inviolability of the nature of humankind can only be safeguarded by a state which - opposing John Rawls’
doctrine of Political Liberalism, which requires the liberal constitutional state to solely rely on the principle of public justification - does not refrain from religious and transcendent foundations for legal rulings. In other words, has the secular legal system reached its systematic limits when it comes to current bioethical challenges?


In his new monograph, Prof. Ulrich Willems from the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” examines the challenge posed to democracy by conflicts over values. In this study, the author demonstrates that even in questions of values, specific kinds of compromise are, contrary to currently accepted opinion, amenable to forming the core of a strategy to soften conflicts over such values. After critically confronting the model of liberal political theory for dealing with conflicts over values, the book makes a plea to orient the political order of morally pluralistic societies towards the idea of a “modus vivendi”.

The author begins by systematically reconstructing previous approaches towards and theories about the democratic regulation of conflicts and makes a proposal towards identifying the logic and dynamics of conflicts over values. In a second step, he analyses empirical evidence for the success of the existing conventional and alternative conflict management procedures, in order to assess their suitability for resolving conflicts over values. The third part of the study is dedicated to the question of the political order of plural societies.


Is secularization an integral part of modernity? In this volume, renowned social and cultural scientists, historians and philosophers present different approaches to an analytical understanding of modernity and the role of religion in modern societies. Thereby, this book makes a contribution to current discussions about unity and plurality in modernity, its universality and contingency as well as about the compatibility of religion with modernity and the continuous tension between the two.

The attempted murder of an aristocratic nun in the Roman convent of Sant’Ambrogio triggered an inquisitorial investigation, the development of which exceeded all the judges’ fears: nuns who fell into peculiar conditions hovering between sexual and mystical ecstasy, novices who were raped, confessors who were blessed via French kissing, suspicious persons who were got rid of – all this turned out to have happened for decades and for the greater glory of God and the Virgin Mary. The site of these events was only a stone’s throw away from the Vatican, and important guests repeatedly stayed overnight and protected the convent.

The records of this unparalleled inquisitorial investigation were to disappear into the depths of the Vatican archives forever. Nobody could know that they were going to be made accessible to research a hundred years later – and that Hubert Wolf would track them down. He reconstructs the trial against the nuns and the confessors from the meticulous transcripts, thus revealing Sant’Ambrogio’s secret, which, due to the direct involvement of the Vatican’s top theologians and the Pope himself, continues to have explosive power until today.


The Vatican’s dealings with the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich have long been swathed in myth and speculation. After almost seventy years, the crucial documents for the years leading up to 1939 were finally made accessible, revealing the bitter conflicts that raged behind the walls of the Vatican. Anti-Semites and philo-Semites, adroit diplomats and dogmatic fundamentalists, influential local bishops and powerful cardinals argued passionately over the best way to contend with the intellectual and political currents of the modern age: liberalism, communism, fascism, and National Socialism. Hubert Wolf explains why a philo-Semite association was dissolved, while at the same time anti-Semitism was not condemned, how the Vatican concluded a concordat with the Third Reich in 1933, why Hitler’s Mein Kampf was never prohibited by the Church and which factors surrounded the Pope’s “silence” on the persecution of the Jews.
> **Italian edition:** Il papa e il diavolo. Il Vaticano e il Terzo Reich, Rome: Donzelli 2008.
> **Catalan edition:** El Papa i el diable. El Vaticà i el Tercer Reich, Lleida: Pagès editors 2009.

This book is the result of a series of lectures which established a short history of mediation. From antiquity to medieval, early modern and modern times experts followed the theory and practice of peace-making and found comparable practices in different epochs which make clear that the mediator, who tries to end conflicts by convincing the parties of a peaceful solution, is not a modern phenomenon. The function has medieval and early modern predecessors which worked with very similar methods as their contemporary successors do. It was very necessary to elucidate this forgotten history.


In his book Toleranz und Gewalt Arnold Angenendt takes up the controversies of recent historical accusations against Christianity. The list of charges contains a huge set of ‘mortal sins’ such as: body and gender hostility, unsubstantiated feelings of guilt, a claim for the truth of faith – and thus intolerance, the acknowledgement of the crusaders as assistants to the murder of innocent Muslims, the Inquisition and its torturing and burning of ‘heretics’ and ‘witches’, the mission understood as a ‘colonial war’. Finally, the general treatment of the Jews (anti-Judaism) is believed to be the precursor to the Holocaust. Hence, Christianity is said to have left a ‘blood trail’ of nine million victims in history. On a broad factual basis, Angenendt confidently presents what religious, cultural and general historical research of the last twenty years has revealed about those accusations. The results are remarkable.


The book goes back to a series of lectures in which experts analyzed inauguration-rituals in different epochs and cultures. The result is an overview of forms and functions of rituals which support a new beginning by examining relations, rights and duties and promising the good will of all participants. Despite many differences the common focus of these attempts is the concentration on
the relation of religion and politics in these rituals on the one hand and the question of how much stage-play is hidden in the performance of these rituals on the other.


In his book, Prof. Thomas Bauer, professor of Islamic Studies in the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”, tells ‘a different story of Islam’; the result: for centuries, Islam was much more tolerant towards various values and claims to truth than the West thinks. The author sheds light on 1000 years of Arabic-Islamic cultural history, from religion, law and politics, through literature and art, to the treatment of sexuality and minorities.

Bauer aims at contradicting the distorted image of Islam as politically and religiously dogmatic, intolerant and prudish, which the West has created to be its ‘replacement’ enemy since the fall of the Eastern Bloc. Under the title, The Culture of Ambiguity, Bauer describes how Arabic-Islamic societies allowed contradictory norms to exist side by side, whether in the interpretation of the Koran, sexual morality, poetry, law or political debates.

“It was 19th-century colonialism that first put pressure on the Middle East to define unambiguous norms, like the West did,” the historian argues. If Islamism today promotes a narrow claim to truth, it learnt this attitude from the West. “It is only superficially a return to ‘traditional Islamic values’.” Thus today ideas are considered Islamic that in reality are fragments of Victorian morality.

It follows from the author’s conclusions that it is wrong to talk of a “re-Islamisation” in the 20th century. Instead, Islamism is “the creation of a new, intolerant, ideological Islam”, which takes its cue from the totalitarian structures of earlier western ideologies which showed no patience for any variety of viewpoints. In the West that changed after 1968: “But the Islamic world missed out on this transformation. Islam is not lacking an Enlightenment, as Europe had in the 18th century, but the revolt of 1968.”

New editions: 6th unchanged edition


The book is the first to give a comprehensive account of the history of the interpretation of upright posture. It shows that upright posture (i) has been extensively considered in philosophical anthropology from antiquity to today; and that it (ii) has never been seen as a solely anatomical fact, but has been widely used as a vehicle of human self-interpretation. In antiquity it counted as proof of the privileged position of humans in the cosmos; in the modern world it is often seen as a source of risk. The book includes the metaphorical use of “upright” (“X is an
upright person”) alongside its literal meaning with its anatomical etc. implications. It encompasses anthropological thinking in a broad sense: focusing on philosophical interpretations of upright posture, it also considers scientific, theological and literary sources and shows important interrelations between these branches of thought.
The secularization theory assumes that modernization in its various facets leads to a loss of importance of religion and church in present times. This thesis, a core concept of the classical sociological theory, has become a matter of controversial discussion in the last 15 years. While some sociologists, political scientists and historians still maintain these fundamental assumptions, voices are getting louder from those who point to the increased visibility in the mass media and the rise in political relevance of religions in order to question the correlation between modernization and secularization implied by secularization theory. Above all, they criticize the deterministic tendencies of secularization theory. Furthermore, there is criticism of some of its basic theoretical premises such as, for example, the theory of functional differentiation: Does the differentiation of religion and politics, of religion and science, of religion and law, really necessarily coincide with a decrease of the social importance of religion in modern societies?

This edited volume subjects fundamental statements of the secularization theory to a historical review. Sociologists and historians collaborate in working out to what extent the image of an increasing differentiation of religion and politics applied to the last centuries needs to be revised.


From different research perspectives of a number of various disciplines, the volume examines the interplay between tradition and criticism of tradition in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, an interplay that has significantly shaped the development of the three religions. The contributions focus on the diverse historical and contemporary manifestations of criticism of tradition, as well as on the dynamic processes that led to such criticism, and they illustrate that criticism of religious traditions can become an integral part of tradition itself.

New edition: 2016 as paperback (De Gruyter).
The first volume of the new book series “Blumenberg-Vorlesungen” (Blumenberg lectures) of the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” has now been published by Herder Verlag. The historian and first Hans Blumenberg Visiting professor, Prof. Dr. Lucian Hölscher writes about Protestant piety in Germany between the Reformation and the secular society in the volume. The articles are based on the public series of lectures “Protestant piety culture and the anniversary of the Reformation 2017” held in the summer semester 2016 in Münster. The book traces the change of Protestant piety culture through the past centuries. It looks more closely at the religious practices and their social environment than at the history of the Christian churches. The reflections focus on the closeness of Catholic and Protestant piety cultures in the age of the Reformation, on the denominational split in the 18th century, and on the secular religiousness of the present age. The Cluster of Excellence’s “Hans Blumenberg Visiting Professorship for Religion and Politics” is to contribute to bringing innovative impulses from international research to Münster and consolidating the interdisciplinary compatibility at the Cluster of Excellence. “The Blumenberg lectures are not committed to a certain discipline but are interdisciplinary in character”, writes the speaker of the research association, sociologist of religion Prof. Dr Detlef Pollack in the introduction. Experts from the wide-ranging humanities and social sciences are invited to present, in the city of the Peace of Westphalia, their views of the changing relationship of religion and politics.

For the legal scholar from Münster, Prof. Nils Jansen, the study of law concentrates excessively on law that has been officially issued. Up to now it has been concerned almost entirely with constitutionally passed laws and judicial decisions. “These legally recognised institutions fit comfortably into the traditional, state-centred understanding of law and justice, but this approach neglects the important dogmatisation processes whereby non-state legal texts become recognised as legally authoritative,” as Prof. Jansen writes in his new book, *The Making of Legal Authority: Non-legislative Codifications in Historical and Comparative Perspective*.

The legal scholar from the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” concentrates on texts which achieved legal authority without being issued by legislatures or courts. The book draws on numerous examples from the Middle Ages to today: from Justinian’s Institutes and Blackstone’s Commentaries, to modern examples such as the American Law Institute’s Restatements and the UNIDROIT Prin-
Ciples of International Commercial Contracts. In all these cases, normative texts which were written by professional legal scholars, often professors, have been recognised as legally authoritative even in court.

In his book, Prof. Jansen looks at how such ‘non-legislative codifications’ become established as legal reference texts, how they thereby achieve quasi-legal authority, and to what extent such processes demand that conventional ideas of law be revised. It therefore provides the first historically comparative analysis of these kinds of dogmatisation processes and a provocative contribution to the current international debates about the harmonisation of European private law and the globalisation of private economic law.


Dogmatization processes are historical processes in which binding epistemic assumptions concerning basic concepts, patterns of interpretation and world-perception, and normative beliefs are stabilized as a framework in which normative arguments can be made. In a historical-comparative approach, the essays collected in this volume discuss such processes for legal and theological discourses. In doing so, they reveal structural similarities as well as obvious differences between legal and theological thinking and writing. The contributions focus on the methodological standards of the normative arguments, whose purpose, particularly in law, is often to limit the pertinent arguments or to put them into a hierarchy. In addition, the authors analyse institutional processes and structures in which dogmatization takes place, for example the differentiation between the law and its description or application, procedural mechanisms such as a transfer of the power to decide normative questions to councils or courts, or the rationalization of dissent in academic institutions.


This book provides a multidisciplinary student-oriented introduction into issues of normativity. In its thirteen partially historical and partially systematic lectures it brings together the largely unrelated discourses of historians, legal scholars, theologians, and philosophers. The purpose of those thirteen lectures is to provide readers that are not familiar with the subtleties of the different discipline’s discussions with an overview on the core issues of contemporary debate. The contributions are therefore divided into a historical-descriptive and a normative-systematic part. The first eight lectures analyse the genesis of normativity. From a historical point of view, they address specific understandings and conceptions of normativity in former times: in old Israel, in medieval
times in Europe and in the Islamic world as well as at the beginning of the 20th century. The systematic lectures collected in the second part of the volume address current issues concerning the justification of legal and moral norms as well as of theological beliefs in modern society.


Commentaries have always been an essential medium of legal and theological discourse as they reflect how theological and legal thinking is related to authoritative reference texts. In this volume, lawyers and theologians analyse commentaries from a comparative historical perspective. They examine their form, methods, functions and institutional relations as well as the authority commentaries may carve out for themselves. The authors cover a wide range of approaches and traditions from antiquity to modern times. They discuss the classical commentaries of the Roman legal scholars, the Christian and Jewish Bible commentaries, the flourishing traditions of the medieval and early modern ages, and they trace the more recent developments leading up to the current state of commentaries in 21st century law and theology. The comparison shows that commentaries both adopt and shape the structure and culture of the respective discourse.


A world without commentaries? For German lawyers, this is hardly imaginable. The most important commentaries can be found on every lawyer’s desk, and in practice, the content of legal rules is gathered from the commentary rather than the codes and statutes. In a similar way, the legal world was made of commentaries and reference texts in the view of the European legal scholars of medieval and early modern times. However, academic research has given little consideration to the functions and features of commentaries as media within the legal discourse. David Kästle-Lamparter examines the World of Commentaries from a comparative historical perspective. He analyses how commentaries have become an essential medium of legal discourse in German and European jurisprudence and lays the foundation for a theory of legal commentary.
Envisioning the future is a fundamental political act, since it always expresses a critical stance towards the current society. In addition, visions of the future form a contrast to the present which highlights the very insufficiency of today’s state of affairs. The book shows that apocalypse and utopia are two historically significant visions of the future which created images and narratives that persist until today. The shining Heavenly Jerusalem or the perfection of utopian communities stresses the downside of the present – thereby generating political pressure. The fictitious account of the island Utopia with its ideal social conditions, which English statesman and author Thomas More (1475–1535) published, aimed at criticizing the conditions in Europe at that time. At any time, utopias have served as alternative models to contemporary societies. This political angle is of utmost importance for the apocalypse as well: On the one hand, apocalyptic visions depict the present hardship in drastic terms and show how it will inevitably result in the end of the world. On the other hand, the end of the world becomes the beginning of a new, better age, the Heavenly Jerusalem. Early examples are the accounts in the New Testament such as the Apocalypse of John, that imagines salvation as a comfort to the oppressed Christians in the Roman Empire. The book focuses on historical and contemporary instances of apocalyptic and utopian thought. The introduction by Christian Sieg and two contributions by Klaus Vondung and by Andreas Urs Sommer introduce the two basic concepts. While many contributions of the past decades have located apocalyptic and utopian thought in close proximity, Vondung and Sommer analyze the imagination of the future either in apocalyptic or in utopian terms, thereby stressing the difference of both genres. The following chapters trace the history of apocalyptic thought: Joachim Friedrich Quack focuses on prophecy in Old Egypt, Jay Rubenstein analyses the First Crusade, which was justified as a Biblical eschatological battle, Matthias Riedl explains Joachim of Fiore’s apocalyptic visions of the future, and Maren Conrad takes a look at the variations of apocalyptic narratives in contemporary culture, as to be found in literature, movies and computer games. The last four contributions of the volume take recourse to visions of the future that might be characterized as utopian. Katharina Martin follows the vision of the Golden Age and its iconic reflection on coins of the Roman Empire. Toni Morant i Ariño focuses on the ways in which the female movement of the Falange Española employs utopian as well as apocalyptic ideas. Josef Frücht analyses the conditions and narratives of utopian drafts after the end of postmodernity by examining the two movies Avatar (2009) and Cloud Atlas (2012). Finally, Tatjana Hörnle shows that views into the future are of importance for the legal discourse as well.
types formed the picture of prophetic authorship: on the one hand, the prophet of the Old Testament that was established first as an authority and then also as an author in the Jewish scriptural tradition (such as Moses, David, the four major and the twelve minor prophets), and on the other hand, the inspired and enthusiastic poet as a seer (vates) from Plato up until pagan late antiquity.

The volume analyses these models of the divinely inspired and legitimized author in their specific contextual versions and changing functions. It aims at an interdisciplinary comparison in order to describe precisely the different authorial roles in diverse religious and political communities and their scriptural production. Especially in times of crises and revolutions, prophetical charisma claimed to provide critical analysis of the present situation, an interpretation of the future and the promise of salvation. The articles collected in this volume examine the ways in which prophetical speech was granted authority in a twofold meaning of authorship, the specific hermeneutics of prophetical writings and reservations against a false prophethood, as well as critical and ironic views on the old prophetical traditions. The articles are authored by renowned scholars from Theology, Classics, Medieval and New Latin Philology, German Philology, Romance Philology, Arabic Philology, Comparative Literature, as well as History.


The book deals with the criticism of unjust government in the so called “Fürstenpredigt” (Sermon to the Princes) of the radical Protestant reformer Thomas Müntzer (1489–1525) – Luther’s main adversary during the inner-Protestant conflicts in the early Reformation period and the Peasant Wars of 1525. The aim of the book is an analysis of the socio-historical and cultural backgrounds of Müntzer’s criticism in the context of a cultural history of politics. The sermon, with the original title “Auslegung des andern Unterschieds Danielis” (“Interpretation of the Second Chapter of Daniel”), is a radical criticism of the late medieval and early modern idea of a translatio imperii, of which the text of Daniel 2 is the main biblical source. The narrative about the succession of the four empires in Daniel 2 has been a paramount text already in the late antique discourse on the legitimation of political power and became a main source of theological legitimation of governmental power in the medieval and early modern German Empire and its states. Müntzer breaks with the traditional interpretation of the text, and gives a radical re-interpretation emphasizing that the political power of the princes is only conditional in the period of the last empire, awaiting the coming of God’s kingdom. If the princes do not obey the word of God and engage themselves in actively fostering the spread of the gospel, their rule is doomed and must be given to the common man. The book shows that Müntzer’s interpretation is deeply rooted in the contemporary belief in a presentic eschatology – also shared by Luther and the
humanistic elites, but with different consequences. Thus, Müntzer has re-activated the critical potential of the original Aramean book of Daniel, which is also found in the writings of the church fathers before Jerome and Augustin, which have established the present legitimatory paradigm. Müntzer himself was convinced that he himself was a chosen prophet of God and a second Daniel, preaching the gospel to the princes and leading the common man to salvation by establishing God’s kingdom on earth, here and now. The study gives further attention to Müntzer’s own engagement in local politics and tries to explain why his plan to establish a divine rule has failed because of his neglect of real politics.


This collection of essays by the author explores the relation between philosophical ethics and religion from two perspectives: First, how the history of religious notions of God (Gottesbild) is influenced by the development of moral philosophy. Second, to what extent secular moral philosophy may still profit from religious morals and the history of natural law. These questions are discussed on a level of principles but also in various fields of applied ethics. Particular emphasis lies on questions of bioethics and medical ethics regarding the enhancement of the human body and the technical improvement of natural processes, including gene-technology, cloning etc. The essays further develop the conception of a modern ethics based on a meta-ethical framework but at the same time applicable for specific moral problems of modern societies.


In the past, the monotheistic world religions have traditionally subordinated woman with respect to man. Historian Prof. Dr. Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger from the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” of the German University of Münster has edited a German book on the relationship between religion and gender under the title “Als Mann und Frau schuf er sie” (“Man and woman he created them”). “The Catholic Church and Islam for instance are preserving pre-modern, patriarchal gender roles. It is common knowledge that women are not allowed to become priests or imams, for example.” According to the researcher, who was recently awarded the Historisches Kolleg Award, the influence of religions today is most visible in the gender relation. According to the scientist, it is not sufficient to concentrate solely on current problems in order to adequately assess the relationship of religion and gender. Rather, a historically comparative perspective is greatly needed. The omnibus volume’s eleven articles pursue, from the point of view of different subjects and epochs, the question as to how religions have influenced the gender order. Among the authors are scientists from the University of Münster and other German and Dutch universities, including the jurist Titia Loenen from Utrecht and the Berlin cultural scientist Christina von Braun as well as Rabbi Elisa Klapheck and the publicist Khola Maryam Hübsch from Frankfurt. Contributing scholars from the Cluster of
Excellence are the social ethicist Marianne Heimbach-Steins, the historians Werner Freitag and Sita Steckel, and the jurist Bijan Fateh Moghadam. The book assembles contributions to the Cluster of Excellence’s public lecture series “Religion and Gender” of 2011 and 2012. It was published as the seventh volume of the series “Religion und Politik” by Ergon-Verlag, Würzburg.

Stollberg-Rilinger, Barbara, Rituale (Historische Einführungen, vol. 16), Frankfurt/Main et al.: Campus 2013.

A new textbook by historian Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, co-ordinator of the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”, provides an overview of the many different ritual phenomena throughout history. Published in the series Historische Einführungen (Historical Introductions) by the Campus Press, the volume Rituale, introduces the most important theories and debates in the study of historical rituals.

As the historian explains, rituals can be found everywhere in history. Appointments to office and peace-making, baptisms, weddings and funerals, the overthrow of monuments and celebrations of remembrance – rituals have a fundamental, socially structuring function. That is truer still for earlier epochs than for today. Ever since the historical discipline discovered this topic in the wake of the ‘cultural turn’, more and more phenomena have been examined through the lens of ritual theory, Stollberg-Rilinger argues. Prof. Stollberg-Rilinger heads Project B2-22: “Beyond Confessional Clarity: On the Discursive Formation of Heterodox Groups in the Early Modern Period” at the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”.


In the pre-modern period, symbolic acts always had a very powerful visual presence. Contemporaries considered parades, coronations, processions and consecrations to be ‘spectacula’. Their visually suggestive power has proven itself to be a strategy of orchestration which decisively contributed to the effective communication of political and religious messages. The visual aspect of symbolic acts can be observed on several, closely connected levels: actors’ individual gestures have a visual quality, but this is true above all for the complex series of actions in rituals and ceremonies. They were performed as publicly visible, ‘living’ pictures and understood as such: mutually seeing and being seen was their distinguishing characteristic. At a performative level, material images could be included in these actions, whether as an object of religious veneration, for reasons of political propaganda or as representative aides de memoire. At the level of reception, symbolic acts were a prominent subject of depictions in propaganda, historiography and visual art. Their
ephemeral visual aspect could therefore be made permanent at least partially, although admittedly they were shaped according to medial strategies and (re-) orchestrated.

The volume documents an international conference which was held by the Collaborative Research Centre 496, “Symbolic Communication and Social Value Systems from the Middle Ages to the French Revolution” at the University of Münster in October 2007. It also served as a preparation for the exhibition, “Spectacles of Power. Rituals in Ancien Regime Europe, 800–1800” at the Kulturhistorisches Museum, Magdeburg. The articles from various disciplines use selected examples to analyse the connections and inter-medial interactions between images and actions, artefacts, texts and sounds, as regards the so-called ‘Ancien Regime’ in Europe from the early Middle Ages to the French Revolution.


The term “religious plurality“ is on everyone’s lips. In current public debates it is usually assumed that the diversity of religions is an especially modern phenomenon. At the same time, however, historic research paints a different picture: religious plurality does not appear to be a novelty in the history of religion. It can be found in ancient cultures as well as in the European Middle Ages, which are too often portrayed as a monolithic-Christian epoch. But how does the ancient reality of religious plurality differ from our contemporary situation? How did different religious cultures perceive religious plurality, and how do different religious cultures do so today? How do different religious conceptions of the world and ways of life relate to non-religious, secular ones? And, finally, how do historic changes of reality and perception effect possibilities to arrange orders of religious plurality? The contributions to this volume explore these questions. They exemplarily discuss cases from different epochs, regions and religious cultures, and interpret the development of reality, perception and arrangements of religious plurality against the background of their sociocultural, legal, political and economic contextual conditions.
The relationship between Christianity and human rights is a point of contention. Competing claims are those of an exclusive Christian “authorship” concerning human rights on the one hand and references to the bitter resistance of leading representatives of Christianity against the early modern catalogues of human rights (vilified as spawn of individualism and rationalism) on the other. In his essay, Fabian Wittreck underlines the political implications of the question before starting to document that both approaches fall short if one takes into consideration the sources. The initial “official” antagonism shrouds the actual bearing of Christianity which may be described most accurately as facilitating the growth of human rights rather than acting as foundation for them. In comparison with other religions, namely the clear-cut separation of the ‘secular’ and ‘spiritual’ sphere enables Christianity to leave space for the development of the school of rational natural law. Furthermore, the biblical tradition comprises “mustard seeds” that may be utilized by present-day theologians to formulate a Christian doctrine of human rights (which promptly raises the question of human rights vis-à-vis the churches).

The Vatican relies on the long and inalterable tradition of today’s teachings and rules, which give the Pope and the bishops an incredible range of power. Laypeople have nothing to say, all the more if they are female. Since allegedly it has always been like this, reforms are considered sacrilegious. It is high time for a fresh look into history: popes were once members of boards that controlled them, women could forgive sins, laymen had something to say, bishops were elected. For a long time, the Catholic Church has been a broad stream with many anabranches – which were eventually canalized by 19th century centralism. Additionally, traditions were invented that even historians believe in until today. Hubert Wolf reveals ten traditions that have been forgotten and suppressed – thence deriving ideas for a reform for the Church of tomorrow.

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