

NEWSLETTER OF THE CLUSTER OF EXCELLENCE

January 2022



ANNUAL THEME 2021/2022
TRADITION(S)

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EDITORIAL

Dear colleagues,

Invented, hidden, reinterpreted: in its second annual theme, the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” at the University of Münster is concerned with “Tradition(s)”, these being not static but subject to constant change during the course of history. Our interdisciplinary and transepochal research shows how traditions are reinterpreted, hidden or invented in retrospect, depending on the requirements of the community that bears them. Using selected examples ranging from Ancient Egypt to the present day, we will look in this annual theme at how traditions emerge, change, and are transmitted – for example, in literature, law, and religions. Read more about this in the [newsletter](#).

The next Hans Blumenberg Visiting Professor at the Cluster of Excellence will be the Arabic scholar Prof. Dr. Sarah Stroumsa from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, who as part of the annual theme will research in the summer term philosophical traditions of the medieval Islamic world. The Cluster’s programme also includes the discussion series “Tradition(s): interdisciplinary and trans-epochal”, and an international research project on how religious traditions are transmitted in trans-epochal families.

The newsletter also looks back on a rich programme of research in 2021, when the cultural scientist and Egyptologist [Prof. Dr. Jan Assmann](#) was the Hans Blumenberg Visiting Professor at the Cluster of Excellence. In the events organized as part of the professorship, Assmann spoke about the effects of digitalization on his concept of cultural memory, and discussed with us other themes of interest, such as the relationship between religion and culture from Ancient Egypt to the modern age. These events attracted a great deal of attention from the general public.

What also attracted wide attention was the work that we did as part of the first annual theme [“Belonging and Demarcation”](#) on identity conflicts and identity politics. An international population survey provided the first empirical evidence that European societies are divided along identity-political lines into two entrenched camps. The survey, “Of defenders and explorers: an identity conflict over belonging and threat”, attracted the attention of political circles and some 200 international media outlets. [“How much identity politics does our society need?”](#) – this was the question discussed by a Cluster of Excellence panel featuring former Bundestag President Wolfgang Thierse, author Mithu M. Sanyal, and literary scholar Andrea Geier, as well as Islamic theologian Mouhanad Khorchide and sociologist Detlef Pollack from the Cluster.

Many contributions to the annual themes can be seen and heard in the [research podcast “Religion and Politics”](#) and the Cluster of Excellence video channel. In the podcast, researchers report from their interdisciplinary work on religion in a way that is personal, topical, and accessible. With the [podcast series “Belonging or Excluded?”](#), the Cluster of Excellence was an official part of the nationwide celebration to mark “1,700 Years of Jewish Life in Germany”. The newsletter also tells of other activities in [research communication](#): for example, the [training programme “Religious Journalism”](#) run by the Cluster of Excellence and the ifp School of Journalism, which is the only such programme in Germany, dealt with questions of tradition and innovation, dialogue and conflict between religious communities, and international wars waged in the name of God. The programme offered participants from media houses all over Germany the chance to discuss issues with representatives from science, politics, religion, and the media.

We have also expanded our **research programme** by including seven new projects from the disciplines of history, Slavic studies, Protestant theology, Coptic studies, and Arabic studies. The new projects are dedicated to themes such as secularism as a (post-)colonial challenge in France, the “newly baptized” in the Tsarist empire of the 18th and early 19th centuries, and Jewish concepts of purity in the ancient Mediterranean. The sections **Research news**, **Individual staff**, **Early-career researchers**, and **Events** provide information on other developments at the Cluster of Excellence – including conferences on issues such as fake news in the Middle Ages, and the history of treason. Researchers from the Cluster also participated in a worldwide study on dealing with Corona; finally, the “European Academy of Religion” met in Germany for the first time, the conference welcoming 900 international researchers to the University of Münster, where the Cluster of Excellence organized several panels on “Dynamics of Religious Change”.

We are pleased to have acquired research projects involving Cluster members, including the first Käte Hamburger Kolleg at the University of Münster on “Legal Unity and Pluralism”, and a research project funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research on radicalization among Muslims. Our research findings regularly appear in **publications** – the newsletter gives a selection, from the cultural history of Olympus, to a gender-sensitive reading of the Quran, and to theological reflections on “Christianity from the right”. Now available in English translation from Columbia University Press is *A Culture of Ambiguity: An Alternative History of Islam*, the Arabic scholar Prof. Dr. Thomas Bauer’s influential book on the cultural and intellectual history of the Arab-Islamic world.

The Cluster of Excellence mourns the death on 8 August 2021 of the well-known Catholic theologian and church historian **Prof. Dr. Arnold Angenendt**, who was a project leader at the Cluster from 2008 to 2016. In his obituary, church historian Prof. Dr. Hubert Wolf from the Cluster pays tribute to him as a “valuable colleague, a productive researcher, and a fascinating academic teacher”.

We thank you for your interest

Prof. Dr. Nils Jansen

Speaker of the Cluster
of Excellence

Judith Grubel

Acting Head of
Management

Viola van Melis

Head of Research
Communication

P.S.: You can follow our social media channels **@religionpolitik** (Twitter) and **@religionundpolitik** (Instagram).

Our website (**religion-und-politik.de/en**) also provides regular updates on the Cluster of Excellence.

You can recommend the newsletter (in German and English) with this subscription link: **<https://www.uni-muenster.de/Religion-und-Politik/en/newsletter/index.html>**

RESEARCH AT THE CLUSTER OF EXCELLENCE

ANNUAL THEME 2021/22 “TRADITION(S)”



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“Invented, kept secret, reinterpreted”

The second annual theme of the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” has begun under the title “Tradition(s)”. Using selected examples ranging from antiquity to the present, it will examine in the winter and summer terms of 2021/22 how traditions in, for example, literature, law and religions emerge, are transmitted, and change.

“Debates about equality, identity or religion often portray traditions as static, but on closer examination we find that they are subject to constant change. Depending on the interests of the group that bears them, traditions have been and still are being changed, reinterpreted, reshaped, kept secret, veiled or even invented”, explain Jewish scholar Prof. Dr. Regina Grundmann and Catholic theologian Prof. Dr. Michael Seewald.

Next on the programme of the annual theme in the summer term is the discussion series “Tradition(s): interdisciplinary and transepochal”, when researchers from philosophy, sociology, Protestant theology, law, and history will address the themes “Tradition and Normativity”, “Tradition and Competition”, and “Tradition and Rationality”.

The Hans Blumenberg Visiting Professorship will be held in the summer term by the Arabic scholar Prof. Dr. Sarah Stroumsa from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, who as part of the annual theme will be researching philosophical traditions of the medieval Islamic world. In addition, there is an international research project funded by the John Templeton Foundation on the transmission of religious traditions in families in Europe and Canada, and a conference comprising early-career researchers from the Cluster of Excellence will shed light on “Traditions in Transition”.

[Read more](#)

Lecture series “Tradition(s)”



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The second annual theme opened with an interdisciplinary lecture series dealing with tradition(s) in the course of history. Ranging from antiquity to the present, the seven lectures used the example of various traditions to show the importance of transmission processes and to explore how different actors interact in such processes.

The lectures ranged thematically from the ancient Egyptian god Amun, to tradition and innovation in Arabic literature, and to the transmission of religious traditions in families today. The series featured members of the Cluster of Excellence and the University of Münster from the disciplines of Egyptology, Arabic studies, Catholic theology, philosophy, law, Romance studies, and sociology. [Read more](#)

The lectures of the series



The lectures in the lecture series “Tradition(s)” can be viewed as **videos in German language on the Cluster of Excellence website**.



Tradition und Recht
(Prof. Dr. Nils Jansen)



Tradition und Erkenntnis
(Prof. Dr. Oliver R. Scholz)



Tradition und Legitimation
(Prof. Dr. Clemens Leonhard)



Tradition und Innovation
(Prof. Dr. Syrinx von Hees)



Tradition und Tradierung
(Prof. Dr. Christel Gärtner)



Tradition und Aneignung
(Prof. Dr. Angelika Lohwasser)



Tradition und Avantgarde
(Prof. Dr. Karin Westerwelle)

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JAN ASSMANN BLUMENBERG PROFESSOR AT THE CLUSTER OF EXCELLENCE



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Debates on digitalization, religion and culture, and nationalism

The Hans Blumenberg Visiting Professorship at the University of Münster's Cluster of Excellence "Religion and Politics" was held in 2021 by the internationally renowned cultural scientist and Egyptologist Prof. Dr. Jan Assmann, who investigated the effects of digitalization on his concept of cultural memory. For Assmann, the Internet is an inadequate medium for storing cultural memory, primarily because it is unreliable.

"What you can find on the web today will not necessarily be there again tomorrow". Moreover, the Internet cannot decide what is relevant or not. "It will not be decided on the web what tomorrow regards as a significant part of our past and what will live on in cultural memory".

[Read more](#)

In a well-attended public evening lecture held digitally, Assmann also spoke about the relationship between

religion and culture from Ancient Egypt to early forms of Judaism and Christianity in the modern era, explaining that nationalism and religion are becoming increasingly interwoven in authoritarian states across the world.

"Putin's Russia, Erdogan's Turkey, Modi's India, Netanyahu's Israel, Duda's Poland, Orbán's Hungary, and even Trump's USA are examples of this tendency in anti-democratic, authoritarian regimes", said Assmann. "Because nationalism is essentially religious, traditional religion succumbs to such usurpation". [Read more](#)

Jan Assmann's Hans Blumenberg Professorship at the Cluster of Excellence, during which he also discussed issues of religious violence and cultures of memory with the Cluster's early-career researchers in the master class "Religion – Violence – Memory", attracted the attention of leading media in Germany such as the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung ("So don't take Cato's word!") and Deutschlandfunk ("[Does the Internet preserve our cultural memory?](#)").

ANNUAL THEME 2020/21 “BELONGING AND DEMARCATION”



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“Defenders” and “explorers” in identity conflict

The first annual theme of the University of Münster’s Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” dealt in 2020/21 with “Belonging and Demarcation: Dynamics of Social Formation”, which used various event and media formats to address the question of how different social groups live together in plural societies, how affiliation to certain groups and ideas of identity come about, and how conflicts are regulated and social balance achieved.

As part of the annual theme, the Cluster of Excellence made a number of contributions in 2021 to the nationwide debates on identity conflicts and identity politics, with researchers from the Cluster from disciplines such as sociology, law, history, political science, psychology, philosophy, theology, and anthropology being involved, as well as guests from other research institutions and from the political domain. [Read more](#)

International survey: First empirical evidence of an identity-related societal cleavage



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An international survey by the University of Münster’s Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” has provided the first empirical evidence of an identity-related political cleavage of European societies that has resulted in the emergence of two entrenched camps of substantial size. “We see two distinct groups with opposing positions, which we call ‘Defenders’ and ‘Explorers’”, said psychologist Prof. Dr. Mitja Back, spokesperson of the interdisciplinary research team that conducted the most comprehensive survey of identity conflicts in Europe to date.

“Who belongs to our country, who threatens whom, who is disadvantaged? Across all such questions of identity, the initial analyses of the survey reveal a new line of conflict between the two groups, which have almost diametrically opposite opinions. In debates over identity, these opinions have hardened into seemingly irreconcilable conflicts. The study could open up new avenues to tackle these conflicts”.

The survey attracted a great deal of attention from the political domain and from around 200 media outlets in Germany and abroad. The research group consists of the sociologists Prof. Dr. Detlef Pollack and Dr. Olaf Müller, the psychologists Prof. Dr. Mitja Back and Prof. Dr. Gerald Echterhoff, and the political scientist Prof. Dr. Bernd Schlipphak. [Read more](#)

Panel discussion on identity politics with Wolfgang Thierse



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Former Bundestag President Wolfgang Thierse was invited to a Cluster of Excellence panel, where he warned left-wing identity politicians against levelling aggressive accusations at the majority society. The Trier literary scholar Prof. Dr. Andrea Geier countered that an attitude of “I’m no longer allowed to say anything” shows a lack of willingness to change. The event, entitled “How much identity politics does our society need?”, attracted a great deal of media attention. Besides Thierse and Geier, the discussion featured the Islamic theologian Prof. Dr. Mouhanad Khorchide and the sociologist Prof. Dr. Detlef Pollack (both from the Cluster), as well as the best-selling author Mithu M. Sanyal. [Read more](#)

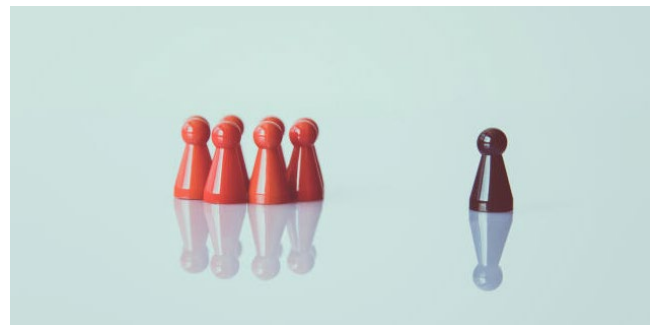
Roundtables on integration and populism



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Summer talks on the ethics and politics of integration, as well as on belonging and demarcation in populist discourse, saw researchers from the Cluster of Excellence such as the political scientist Prof. Dr. Armin Schäfer, the sociologist Dr. Asligül Aysel, and the philosopher Dr. Matthias Hoesch come into conversation with academics from other universities, including the political scientists Prof. Dr. Werner J. Patzelt and Prof. Dr. Karen Schönwälder. [Read more](#)

Survey on disadvantages: “Society doesn’t care about people like me”



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People who believe that their own social group is disadvantaged are more dissatisfied with democracy than others, tend to see migrants as a threat, and are more likely to vote for the AfD. These were the findings of a study conducted with the participation of psychologist Prof. Dr. Mitja Back and political scientist Prof. Dr. Bernd Schlipphak. [Read more](#)

Islamophobia in Western Europe: Fear of Muslims or fundamentalists?



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Islamophobia and right-wing extremism were the focus of the Hans Blumenberg Visiting Professorship held by the social scientist Prof. Dr. Marc Helbling, who as part of the annual theme “Belonging and Demarcation” spoke in his evening lecture during the summer term about “Islamophobia in Western Europe: Fear of Muslims or fundamentalists?”.

In his evening lecture, Marc Helbling shed light on the question of what the term “Islamophobia” stands for. Is it xenophobia, fear of religion, or rejection of religiosity? His findings were based on surveys in several European countries that reveal clear differences in how fundamentalist and liberal Muslims are perceived.

The programme of the Blumenberg Guest Professorship also included a master class. Entitled “Islam(ophobia) in Western Europe: Attitudes, Practices, Structures”, in this master class Marc Helbling discussed with the Cluster of Excellence’s early-career researchers attitudes towards migrants, religious fundamentalism, and the visibility of Muslim practices. [Read more](#)

Lecture series “Empires and belonging”



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Empires have throughout history repeatedly influenced social, cultural, and religious identities within their realms. The lecture series “Empires, Identities and Belonging” opened up new perspectives on the construction of social affiliations across national borders, continents, and epochs.

Dealing with case studies from antiquity to the 20th century, the speakers examined the implications of colonial legacies for social, cultural and religious affiliations and identity constructions of subject populations, past and present.

The lectures in the series can be viewed as a video on the Cluster of Excellence website. [Read more](#)

Podcast “Belonging or Excluded? 1,700 years of Jewish life in Germany”



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Remembering one's own history has always been an integral part of Jewish life. The Cluster of Excellence's research podcast “Belonging or Excluded?” in German language sheds light on 1,700 years of Jewish life in Germany, from the first mention of Jews in late antiquity to the commemoration of the Shoah today. The series was an official part of the nationwide celebration to mark “1,700 Years of Jewish Life in Germany”. The podcast also attracted media coverage and was part of the **programme for the University of Münster's year of celebration.**

[Read more](#)

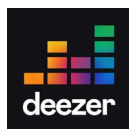
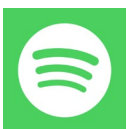
Research podcast “Belonging and Demarcation”



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The research podcast “Religion and Politics” in German language accompanies each of the Cluster of Excellence's annual themes, with researchers discussing in the episodes on the first annual theme “Belonging and Demarcation” case studies from antiquity to the present day, and exploring how affiliations to political, cultural, and religious groups and identities arise, how they provoke conflicts, and how reconciliation can be achieved.

Previous podcast themes have included fake news, conspiracy theories, hate speech, Protestant parliamentarians, and survey results on the effects of Corona on social cohesion. [Read more](#)

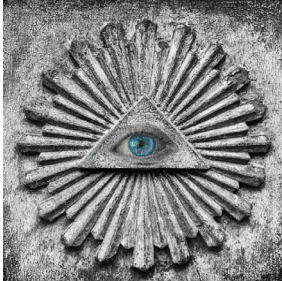


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Everywhere where there are podcasts

All episodes of the research podcast “Religion and Politics” and the series “Belonging or Excluded? 1,700 years of Jewish life in Germany” are available on **Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Deezer**, and the **Cluster of Excellence website.**

Research in the annual theme – texts to read and listen to



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Conspiracy theories in Germany, Poland, and Jordan

An international study on the preponderance, causes, and effects of conspiracy theories was presented by psychologist Prof. Dr. Mitja Back and political scientist Prof. Dr. Bernd Schlipphak, who discuss in the podcast how belief in conspiracy theories differs according to psychological, but also country-specific, factors. [Read more, and listen](#)



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Hate: research on an extreme emotion

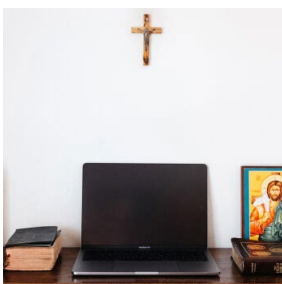
Preachers of hate, hate speech, hate crimes: public debate has become more polarized over the last ten years or so. The literary scholar Prof. Dr. Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf says in her podcast that hate crimes would previously have been called acts of violence. However, this extreme emotion has always been politicized and exploited. [Read more, and listen](#)



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Protestant parliamentarians not predominantly left-wing

The social ethicist Prof. Dr. Arnulf von Scheliha and the theologian Uta Elisabeth Hohmann talk about the initial results of their research project “TheoParl”. Taking a long-term perspective from the 19th century to the present day, they show that Protestant parliamentarians cover the entire political spectrum and are by no means predominantly left-wing. The acceptance of democracy and pluralism came late, especially for Protestants who were very monarchy-oriented during the empire. [Read more, and listen](#)



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Corona and togetherness

Despite the Corona pandemic and restrictions on contact, people in Germany were continuing to show solidarity and togetherness in January 2021, according to a non-representative online survey by the Cluster of Excellence. In the first episode of the research podcast “Religion and Politics”, political scientist Carolin Hillenbrand explains the results of her research. [Read more, and listen](#)



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History of treason

Whether regicide, whistleblowing, or calls of “enemy of the people” from so-called lateral thinkers – for historian PD Dr. André Krischer, betrayal has shaped political fortunes from antiquity to the present day. And it has many faces: the Judas kiss that leads to the crucifixion of Jesus is considered a betrayal that is necessary for salvation. High treason, on the other hand, can trigger an overthrow of those in power and is deemed the ultimate political crime. [Read more, and listen](#)



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Fake news long before Trump

According to researchers from the Cluster of Excellence, fake news existed long before Donald Trump and social media. Whether courtly plots or conspiracy theories in the face of the plague: uncertainty about the truth of news is not a new phenomenon. “The negotiation of true and false information has always been able to develop its own dynamics in times of crisis. This also applies to the Middle Ages, although communication in this period required a much stronger corporeal presence”, explain the Romance scholar PD Dr. Pia Claudia Doering and the historian Dr. Marcel Bubert. [Read more, and listen](#)



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Fashion victims on board of Sebastian Brant's Ship of Fools

Exaggerated vanity, infidelity, bad table manners: the moral satire The Ship of Fools by the humanist Sebastian Brant, who died 500 years ago, depicts human misbehaviour of all kinds. German scholar Prof. Dr. Bruno Quast talks about the most popular pre-Reformation work, which was published with illustrations by the young Albrecht Dürer and still holds up a mirror to readers today. [Read more, and listen](#)



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Afterlife in the world's religions

Religious scholar Prof. Dr. Perry Schmidt-Leukel examines the ideas that the world's religions have of the afterlife. "Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists have also developed diverse ideas of the afterlife – as an answer to the great human question: Does something come after death? And, if so, what?" For Schmidt-Leukel, theology today should address such questions in the context of the faith of all religions, i.e. an "interreligious theology". [Read more, and listen](#)



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Populated by gods, but devoid of humans

Archaeologist Prof. Dr. Achim Lichtenberger has presented the first major scholarly work in a century on Olympus, showing that, while Greek mythology claimed that the famous mountain massif was populated by gods, it was in real life almost deserted for thousands of years. Since antiquity, the mountain has been a surface onto which religious, political, and pop-cultural ideas can be projected. [Read more, and listen](#)

RESEARCH NEWS

New research projects expand the Cluster of Excellence's spectrum of themes



Religion and Politics

CLUSTER OF EXCELLENCE | WWU MÜNSTER

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The Cluster of Excellence has expanded its research programme with seven new projects from the disciplines of history, Slavic studies, Protestant theology, Coptic studies, and Arabic studies. The new projects range from religion in the ancient Mediterranean to secularism in France in the 20th century. The seven University of Münster professors took part in an ideas contest organized by the Cluster of Excellence to establish new research projects on “Religion and Politics”. [Read more](#)

- Prof. Dr. Eve-Marie Becker: Cosmocracy and Pantocracy in Early Christianity (KoPaC): Roots, Functions, and Effects of Early Christian Rulership Images
- Prof. Dr. Silke Mende: Secularism as a (post-) colonial challenge? Religion and republicanism in Marseille, 1946-1989
- Prof. Dr. Christophe Nihan: The emergence and transformations of concepts of purity in the Judaism of the ancient Mediterranean during the Persian and Hellenistic periods

- Prof. Dr. Gesa Schenke: Abraham and Daily Life: Active and Transmitted Piety in the Coptic Tradition of the Testament of Abraham Through Original Codices of the 4th and 10th Centuries
- Prof. Dr. Syrinx von Hees: Transformations of the Burda: political dimensions of a controversial literary-religious discourse in the 13th-15th century
- Prof. Dr. Ricarda Vulpius: The “newly baptized” in the Tsarist empire of the 18th and early 19th century
- Prof. Dr. Irina Wutsdorff: Between religious tradition and aesthetic innovation. The a-mimetics of icons in Russian art and literature in the 19th and 20th century

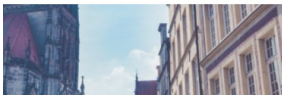
New postdoctoral projects

Three postdocs will also begin new research projects at the Cluster of Excellence in the spring of 2022:

- Dr. Róii Ball: Transregional Farming Families, Religious Revivalism, and Agrarian Colonization in Germany's Imperial Frontiers, 1860s-1920s
- Dr. Jelena Radovanović: Law in Religious Spaces: Ottoman Religious Endowments (waqf) in Post-Ottoman Southeast Europe
- Dr. Nandagopal R. Menon: Polemics, Apologetics and Conversion: A Diachronic Study of Religious Change



#EuAre2021
Münster, Aug 30-Sept 2



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Research on “Religion and Change” at the European Academy

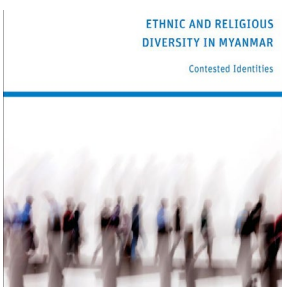
The “European Academy of Religion” (EuAre) held its annual conference in Germany for the first time in 2021. Taking the title “Religion and Change”, the conference at the University of Münster saw 900 international scholars present the results of interdisciplinary research on religion. As a founding member of the Academy, the Cluster of Excellence organized 15 of the approximately 160 panels on themes from its current research programme, ranging from political Islam in Europe, to religion and sustainability, and religious emotions in literature, to controversies surrounding Pope Pius XII during the period of National Socialism. [Read more](#)



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Research on people’s first impressions of refugees

Facial expression and attractiveness are more influential in people’s first impressions of refugees than the latter’s refugee status. Spontaneous degradation of refugees is found especially among Germans with right-wing attitudes. These are the findings of studies conducted by the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” at the University of Münster, with the participation of psychologist Prof. Dr. Mitja Back. [Read more](#)



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“Recent escalation of violence in Myanmar reveals complex struggles over identity”

Destruction of entire villages, blockades by the military junta of international aid deliveries: according to religious studies scholar Prof. Dr. Perry Schmidt-Leukel and theologian Prof. Dr. Hans-Peter Großhans, complex struggles over identity that have been unresolved for decades are behind the latest escalation of violence in Myanmar. The researchers of the Cluster of Excellence have published one of the most comprehensive books to date on the connections between ethnic and religious identities, and the identity politics, of Myanmar. [Read more](#)



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New network for research on religion in Africa

“Trans”, a international network for research on religion in Africa, was launched in February under the leadership of the anthropologist Prof. Dr. Dorothea Schulz from the Cluster of Excellence and Dr. Souleymane Diallo from the Institute of Anthropology at the University of Münster. Internationally renowned experts are exploring religious discussions and conflicts in Africa, thus strengthening the Cluster of Excellence’s international and non-European religious research. [Read more](#)



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Religious communities in the pandemic

Religious communities are playing a key role in the successful management of the pandemic: this is the conclusion reached by researchers from the Universities of Leipzig and Münster, including political scientist Carolin Hillenbrand from the Cluster of Excellence and political scientist Prof. Dr. Oliver Hidalgo from the Institute for Political Science (ifpol) at the University of Münster. Their study was commissioned by the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (ifa). [Read more](#)



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Worldwide study on how individuals are coping with corona

Psychologists from the Universities of Münster, Munich, and Osnabrück have joined forces in the project “Coping with Corona” (CoCo), a worldwide survey by researchers from over 25 countries that is designed to investigate how individuals are coping with corona and to derive individualized measures for this and future crises. Project spokesperson for the DFG-funded study is psychologist Prof. Dr. Mitja Back from the Cluster of Excellence. [Read more](#)



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“Looking into the future when it’s hard to bear the present”

Molybdomancy on New Year’s Eve, annual horoscopes, tarot cards – divination has always been an attempt to deal with the uncertain future. “Divination has been especially popular in times of crisis, when worry about the future is difficult to bear, as in the pandemic today. In the face of epidemics, religious conflict, bad harvests, or times of war, for example, people in the early modern period urgently sought predictions. But people also consulted supernatural powers about their personal fate, too”, explains historian Prof. Dr. Ulrike Ludwig from the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”. [Read more](#)



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Maltreated imperial corpses and digital cemetery events: Historical practices of caring for the dead

Dismembering corpses, boiling down mortal remains, politically critical inscriptions on gravestones – past practices of caring for the dead often seem strange today, but, according to historians, they can be understood in the context of their time. “Care of the dead in earlier epochs was not irreverent, but rather an expression of care and appreciation for the deceased person”, explains the byzantinist Prof. Dr. Michael Grünbart from the University of Münster’s Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”. [Read more](#)

THE CLUSTER OF EXCELLENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MÜNSTER



© Forschungsstelle Asia Minor

Ancient temple discovered in Turkey

Led by ancient historian Prof. Dr. Engelbert Winter, a team of archaeologists from the University of Münster have discovered during excavations in southeastern Turkey a previously unknown temple from Roman times. The DFG project in the ancient city of Doliche is closely linked to Winter's research at the Cluster of Excellence. [Read more](#)



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Cluster of Excellence at the third University of Münster Digital Humanities Day

Under the motto "Join the Digital", researchers from the Cluster of Excellence contributed their research experience of digital methods in the humanities at the third Digital Humanities Day at the University of Münster. DH projects at the Cluster of Excellence use religiously binding texts to explore the tension between theological doctrine and lived religiosity. Participants include the theologians Prof. Dr. Hubert Wolf, Prof. Dr. Holger Strutwolf, and Prof. Dr. Mouhanad Khorchide. [Read more](#)



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Käte Hamburger Kolleg on "Legal Unity and Pluralism"

Led by historian Prof. Dr. Ulrike Ludwig and legal scholar Prof. Dr. Peter Oestmann from the Cluster of Excellence, the first Käte Hamburger Kolleg at the University of Münster has been conducting research since June 2021 on how the relationship between legal unity and pluralism has been shaped in different cultural contexts and epochs. The Kolleg has been awarded funding of around 7.8 million euros by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. [Read more](#)



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Research project on radicalization among Muslims

The Islamic theologian Prof. Dr. Mouhanad Khorchide and the sociologists of religion Prof. Dr. Detlef Pollack, Prof. Dr. Levent Tezcan, and Dr. Olaf Müller (all from the Cluster of Excellence) have acquired funding for a research project on the radicalization of Muslims. The project examines, for example, the role played in processes of radicalization by the formation of a culturally relevant affect of inferiority and resentment among Muslims. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research is funding the project with 1.46 million euros. [Read more](#)



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Acquisition of research network “Cultures of Compromise”

Is there a decline in our society of people’s ability and willingness to compromise? This is the question being investigated by the new research network involving the University of Münster, “Cultures of Compromise”. Political scientist Prof. Dr. Ulrich Willems from the Cluster of Excellence is responsible for the project on behalf of the University of Münster. Based at the University of Duisburg-Essen, the project has been awarded funding for three years of 2.1 million euros from the NRW Ministry of Culture and Science. [Read more](#)

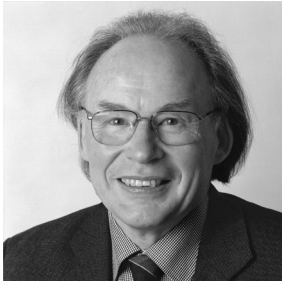


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DFG long-term project on Friedrich Schleiermacher

A long-term DFG project involving the social ethicist Prof. Dr. Arnulf von Scheliha from the Cluster of Excellence is working on the first complete edition of the influential Protestant theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher’s lectures on “Christian Moral Doctrine”. The DFG is funding the project for a maximum of ten years with up to 2.8 million euros. [Read more](#)

INDIVIDUAL STAFF



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Church historian Arnold Angenendt dies

The Cluster of Excellence mourns the death of its colleague Prof. Dr. Arnold Angenendt, who passed away on 8 August 2021 at the age of 86. The Catholic theologian was a project leader at the Cluster of Excellence from 2008 to 2016, and taught church history at the Faculty of Catholic Theology in Münster from 1981 to 1999. In his obituary, church historian Prof. Dr. Hubert Wolf from the Cluster of Excellence pays tribute to him as a “valuable colleague, productive researcher, and fascinating academic teacher”. [Read more](#)



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British Academy awards the Burkitt Medal to Rainer Albertz

The British Academy, the United Kingdom’s national academy of sciences for the humanities, has awarded the “Burkitt Medal for Biblical Studies” to emeritus Protestant Old Testament scholar Prof. Dr. Rainer Albertz for his life’s work. Albertz was a project leader at the Cluster of Excellence from 2008 to 2015. [Read more](#)



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Honorary doctorate for ancient historian Johannes Hahn

The ancient historian Prof. Dr. Johannes Hahn was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest in May. Hahn’s research focuses on the history of late antiquity and early Christianity. [Read more](#)



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Sigmund Freud Prize for church historian Hubert Wolf

The German Academy for Language and Poetry has awarded the Sigmund Freud Prize for academic prose to the church historian Prof. Dr. Hubert Wolf from the Cluster of Excellence. The prize, which is worth 20,000 euros, was awarded to Wolf “for his vividly written and intellectually challenging books”. [Read more](#)

EVENTS

WWU MÜNSTER
 Exzellenzcluster „Religion und Politik“
TAG DES EXZELLENZCLUSTERS
 Einblicke in neue Forschungsfelder
 28.5.2021 | 9.00 Uhr via Zoom

VERANSTALTER
 Exzellenzcluster „Religion und Politik“
 28.05.2021, 09:00 Uhr
 via Zoom (Link im Anmeldebogen)

ANMELDUNG
 Teilnahme per Zoomlink in Zoom.
 Anmeldebogen: www.wwu.de/exzellenzcluster/religion-und-politik/veranstaltungen/2021/tag-des-exzellenzclusters

Mit Projektpräsentationen von
 Ulrike Ludwig, Anna Maj Blundell,
 Hans Beck, Marian Helm, Sophia Nomicos,
 Débora Marques de Matos,
 Francesco Gusella, Arne Laßen,
 Kirsten Kamphuis, Ines Michalowski

wissen.leben

Day of the Cluster of Excellence

Members of the Cluster of Excellence came together again for the “Day of the Cluster of Excellence” to discuss new ideas and findings from current research projects. At the centre of the day were lectures from sociology, Jewish studies, as well as history and religious studies, which, using various case studies, illuminated the complex dynamics of religion, politics, and society. [Read more](#)

PROGRAMME

Prof. Dr. Ulrike Ludwig

Wahrsagerei und Politik in der Frühen Neuzeit. Überlegungen zu einem ambivalenten Zusammenhang

Anna Maj Blundell

The Language of God

Prof. Dr. Hans Beck, Dr. Marian Helm, Dr. Sophia Nomicos

Lokale Welten 2.0. Die Sakrallandschaft des Saronischen Golfes in der Antike

Dr. Débora Marques de Matos

The Other Within: Self-Identity and Othering in the Haggadah

Dr. Francesco Gusella

Entangled gardens: the Cup of Constantino de Braganza at the National Museum of Capodimonte, Naples

Arne Laßen

Muslimische Präsenz und soziale Arrangements in städtischen Kindergärten – ein Zwischenbericht aus der Feldforschung

Dr. Kirsten Kamphuis

Gender and Religion in (Post-)Colonial Indonesia: Women’s Print Cultures, c. 1920-1960

Prof. Dr. Ines Michalowski

Platz schaffen für Religion? Länder- und organisationspezifische Prägungen der Aushandlung von Säkularität



Fake news in the Middle Ages

Fake news existed long before Donald Trump and social media. A conference with international researchers from the fields of literature and history saw the Romance scholar PD Dr. Pia Claudia Doering and the historian Dr. Marcel Bubert discuss the extent to which current debates had similar constellations in the European Middle Ages. [Read more](#)



History of treason

All epochs and states have considered treason to be the ultimate political crime, and it has been punished draconically – however, the phenomenon has been little researched so far. Together with Prof. Dr. Mark Cornwall from the University of Southampton, the historian PD Dr. André Krischer hosted an international conference at the Cluster of Excellence to shed light on the global history of treason across the eras. [Read more](#)



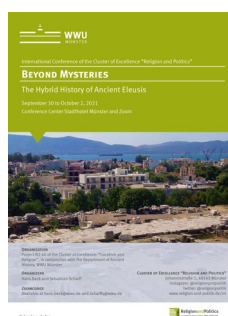
Church records as historical sources

Among historians and lay people interested in genealogy, church records are among the historical sources most used. The historians Dr. Michael Hecht from the Cluster of Excellence and Dr. Eva Maria Lehner invited scholars to a conference to evaluate church records such as registers of baptisms, marriages and burials not only from a quantitative point of view, but also as a means to gain an insight into historical lifeworlds, interpretations of meaning, and cultures of memory. [Read more](#)



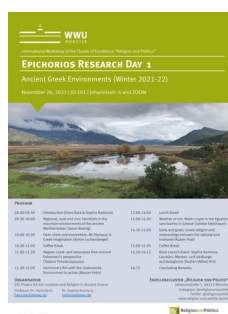
Conference on caring for the dead in the pre-modern period

How the dead have been treated in the past often causes surprise today. But, for Byzantine scholar Prof. Dr. Michael Grünbart, it is an expression of the care and reverence of the time. At a conference organized by Grünbart, international researchers discussed past practices of caring for the dead from antiquity to the present day – from ancient Eastern Roman necropolises in present-day Turkey and Jewish memorials to the dead, to how the dead are cared for today. [Read more](#)



The hybrid history of ancient Eleusis

The ancient city of Eleusis lay at the crossroads of Greek history between Athens and the Peloponnese. An international conference organized by historians Prof. Dr. Hans Beck from the Cluster of Excellence and PD Dr. Sebastian Scharff looked at the city and its changing fortunes. [Read more](#)



First Epichorios Research Day

The first Epichorios workshop dealt with the reciprocal relationships between human beings and nature in ancient Greek religion. The historian Prof. Dr. Hans Beck and the archaeologist Dr. Sophia Nomicos organized the research day. [Read more](#)



Programme of events of the annual theme “Tradition(s)”

- Hans Blumenberg Visiting Professorship in the summer term of 2022 with Prof. Dr. Sarah Stroumsa from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem with research on philosophical traditions of the medieval Islamic world
- Discussion series “Tradition(s): interdisciplinary and transepochal” with discussion evenings on “Tradition and Normativity”, “Tradition and Competition”, and “Tradition and Rationality”
- International conference on a **research project funded by the John Templeton Foundation on the transmission of religious traditions in families in Europe and Canada**
- Conference of the Cluster of Excellence’s early-career researchers on **“Traditions in Transition”**
- **Lecture series “Tradition(s)”**, winter term 2021/22

EARLY-CAREER RESEARCHERS



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University Society prize for Romance scholar Pia Doering

The Münster University Society has awarded a prize to two outstanding young female academics at the University of Münster, one of whom is the Romance scholar PD Dr. Pia Claudia Doering from the Cluster of Excellence. Worth a total of 10,000 euros, the “Prize for the promotion of early-career researchers” will be shared between the two scholars. [Read more](#)



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Marga Bührig Foundation honours research work of Islamic theologian Dina El Omari

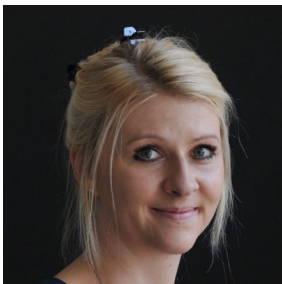
The Swiss Marga Bührig Foundation, which promotes feminist-liberation theological research and its dissemination, has honoured the Islamic theologian PD Dr. Dina El Omari for her publication “Gender and the human couple in the Quran in creation and eschatology”. [Read more](#)



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Excellent dissertations

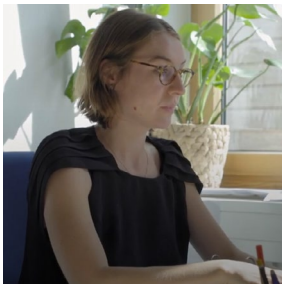
The University of Münster rectorate has given distinction to the 100 doctoral theses awarded summa cum laude in 2021, including the doctoral project carried out at the Cluster of Excellence by the German scholar Fridtjof Bigalke. [Read more](#)



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Managing the plague in the Middle Ages

The medical historian Dr. Katharina Wolff has investigated in her doctoral thesis at the Cluster of Excellence’s Graduate School how the plague was managed in the Middle Ages. The University newspaper “wissen.leben” presented her research, which has just been published by Franz Steiner Verlag. Historian Wolff is also co-author of the Cluster dossier **“Epidemics: Perspectives from Cultural Studies”**. [Read more](#)



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Transformation of synagogues into churches in the Middle Ages

Judaist Franziska Kleybolte from the Graduate School of the Cluster of Excellence has spoken in the WWU video series “What comes next” about her research on the transformation of synagogues into churches on the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages. [Read more](#)



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Opening of graduate school “Regional regulation of religious plurality in comparison”

The graduate school “Regional regulation of religious plurality in comparison” (RePlIV) opened in July with a conference on “Perspectives on religious diversity”. The school is again supervising five doctoral projects of students at the University of Münster’s Centre for Religion and Modernity (CRM) and the University of Bochum’s Centre for Religious Studies (CERES). The directors of the school are the political scientist Prof. Dr. Ulrich Willems from the CRM and the Cluster of Excellence, and the religious scholar Prof. Dr. Volkhard Krech from the University of Bochum. [Read more](#)



© Münster School of Ancient Cultures

New graduate school for ancient cultures

The “Münster School of Ancient Cultures”, a graduate school for all fields of study dealing with ancient cultures and their reception, has been founded with the involvement of the ancient historian Prof. Dr. Johannes Hahn from the Cluster of Excellence. The programme of the school is intended to improve networking among doctoral students working in ancient studies, and to promote the international orientation of doctoral studies. [Read more](#)

PUBLICATIONS

The research findings of the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” appear regularly in publications. Here is a selection from the complete list of books and articles published in the past few months ([website section Publications](#)). Click on the bibliography for further information. .



DECEMBER 2021

Assmann, Jan: **Religion, Staat, Kultur. Altägypten und der Weg Europas** (Blumenberg-Vorlesungen, vol. 5), Freiburg i. Br.: Herder 2021.

Bauer, Thomas: **A Culture of Ambiguity. An Alternative History of Islam**. New York: Columbia University Press 2021.

Doering, Pia Claudia: **Caso y novela. Sobre la diferenciación entre el derecho y la literatura en la Italia medieval tardía**, in: *Hipogrifo* 9/2021, pp. 45–61.

El Omari, Dina: **Koranische Geschlechterrollen in Schöpfung und Eschatologie. Versuch einer historisch-literaturwissenschaftlichen Korankommentierung**, Freiburg i.Br.: Herder 2021.

Jansen, Nils: **The Structure of Tort Law**, Oxford University Press 2021.

Jensz, Felicity: **Missionaries and Modernity. Education in the British Empire, 1830-1910**, Manchester University Press 2022.

Seewald, Michael: **Reforma: Pensar de otro modo la misma Iglesia**, Bilbao: Salterrae 2021.

NOVEMBER 2021

Arweiler, Alexander/ Westerwelle, Karin (eds.): **Flauberts Salammbô. Der Tod der schönen Antike**, Paderborn: Brill Fink 2021.

Berezhnaya, Liliya: **Imagining the Third Rome and the New Jerusalem in the 16th–18th Century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth**, in: *Imagined Empires*, ed. by Dimitris Stamatopoulos, pp. 199–226.

Doering, Pia Claudia: **Casus et nouvelle. La remise en cause des méthodes juridiques dans Décameron X, 4**, in: *Nouvelles en mouvement*, ed. by Jean-Claude Mühlethaler et al., pp. 25–38.

Hoesch, Matthias: **Ein Markt für Geflüchtete? Bedingungen für die Zulässigkeit des Handels mit Flüchtlingskontingenten**, in: *Zeitschrift für praktische Philosophie* 8, Nr. 1/2021, pp. 61–88.

Seewald, Michael: **Lehrentscheidung? Ein Versuch über zwei Konzeptionen magisterialen Handelns in der katholischen Kirche**, in: *Semantiken und Narrative des Entscheidens vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. by Philip Hoffmann-Rehnitz et al., pp. 312–329.

OCTOBER 2021

Back, Mitja/ Echterhoff, Gerald/ Müller, Olaf/ Pollack, Detlef/ Schlipphak, Bernd: **Von Verteidigern und Entdeckern: Ein Identitätskonflikt um Zugehörigkeit und Bedrohung**, Münster 2021.

Hoesch, Matthias/ Sticker, Martin: **Parfit's Mixed Maxim Objection against the Formula of Universal Law Reconsidered**, in: *Journal of Value Inquiry* 56/2021.

Klinkenberg, Hannah/ Fuchs, Doris: **Religion: A resource in european climate politics? An examination of faith-based contributions to the climate policy discourse in the EU**, in: *Zeitschrift für Religion, Gesellschaft und Politik*.

Lichtenberger, Achim/ Raja, Rubina (eds.): **Glass, Lamps, and Jerash Bowls. Final Publications from the Danish-German Jerash Northwest Quarter Project III**, Turnhout: Brepols 2021.

Schlipphak, Bernd/ Bollwerk, Michael/ Back, Mitja: **Beliefs in conspiracy theories (CT): the role of country context**, in: *Political Research Exchange*, 3:1/2021.

SEPTEMBER 2021

Bungert, Heike: **USA: Staat und Religion**, in: *Lexikon für Kirchen- und Religionsrecht*, ed. by Heribert Hallermann, Thomas Meckel et al., pp. 540–543.

Demmrich, Sarah/ Riegel, Ulrich (eds.): **Western and Eastern Perspectives on Religion and Religiosity**, Münster: Waxmann 2021.

Gärtner, Christel/ Winkel, Heidemarie (eds.): **Exploring Islam beyond Orientalism and Occidentalism. Sociological approaches**, Wiesbaden: Springer VS 2021.

Lichtenberger, Achim/ Raja, Rubina (eds.): **The Archaeology of Seasonality**, Brepols 2021.

AUGUST 2021

Wolff, Katharina: **Theorie der Seuche. Krankheitskonzepte und Pestbewältigung im Mittelalter**, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 2021.

Gutmann, Thomas/ Tsopurashvili, Tamar (eds.): **Menschenrechte und Menschenwürde im kulturellen Kontext** (Deutsch-Georgische Jahrbücher, vol. 1), Paderborn: Mentis Verlag 2021.

von Scheliha, Arnulf (with: Claussen, Johann Hinrich et al.): **Christentum von rechts. Theologische Erkundungen und Kritik**, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2021.

Winter, Engelbert et al. (eds.): **Common Dwelling Place of all the Gods. Commagene in its Local, Regional and Global Hellenistic Context**, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 2021.

Wißmann, Hinnerk: **Religionsfreiheit unter Pandemievorbehalt**, in: Zeitschrift für evangelisches Kirchenrecht 66, Nr. 1/2021, pp. 67–79.

JULY 2021

Bungert, Heike: **The German Forty-Eighters in American Society and Politics**, in: Yearbook of Transnational History 4/2021, pp. 69–112.

Hillenbrand, Carolin et al.: **Die Rolle von religiösen Akteuren in der COVID-19-Pandemie. Eine theoriegeleitete empirische Analyse mit politischen Handlungsempfehlungen**, Stuttgart: ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen) 2021.

Lichtenberger, Achim et al.: **First Results and Perspectives of a New Archaeological Project in the Armenian Capital Artaxata: From Artashes-Artaxias I to Roman Imperialism**, Electrum 28/2021, pp. 245–276.

Müller, Olaf: **Religiöse Pluralität und Kirchlichkeit. Religionssoziologische Ansätze – empirische Befunde**, in: Theologisch-Praktische Quartalschrift 169, 2/2021, pp. 141–151.

JUNE 2021

Hoesch, Matthias: **Globale Armut**, in: Handbuch Philosophie und Armut, ed. by Schweiger, Gottfried/ Sedmak, Clemens, pp. 41–48.

Krischer, Andre/ Haug, Tilman (eds.): **Höllische Ingenieure: Kriminalitätsgeschichte der Attentate und Verschwörungen zwischen Spätmittelalter und Moderne**, Konstanz: UVK 2021.

Lichtenberger, Achim et al.: **Jerash. Revealing a ‚peripheral‘ part of an ancient city in northern Jordan**, in: Current World Archaeology 107/2021, pp. 24–31.

Oberauer, Norbert: **The Function of Documents in Islamic Court Procedure: a Multi-Dimensional Approach**, in: Islamic Law and Society (2021), Brill, pp. 1–78.

MAY 2021

Höink, Dominik (ed.): **Religiöse Friedensmusik von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart** (Folkwang Studien, vol. 21). Hildesheim et al.: Olms 2021.

Hoesch, Matthias: **Integrationspflichten und die Rechtfertigung staatlicher Normen**, in: Rechtsphilosophie. Zeitschrift für Grundlagen des Rechts 7/2021, pp. 47–64.

Hreinsson, Haraldur: **Force of Words: A Cultural History of Christianity and Politics in Medieval Iceland (11th–13th Centuries)**, Leiden: Brill 2021.

Müller, Silke: **La Santa Muerte - Leben mit dem Tod. Eine Soziologie der Verehrung**, Bielefeld: transcript 2021.

APRIL 2021

Leonhard, Clemens/ Eckhardt, Benedikt/ Zimmermann, Klaus (eds.): **Reinheit und Autorität in den Kulturen des antiken Mittelmeerraumes** (Religion und Politik, vol. 21), Baden-Baden: Ergon-Verlag 2020.

Lohwasser, Angelika/ Sörgel, Anne: **Ein Zeugnis des frühen kuschitischen Königtums. Die Stele SNM 1851 vom Jebel Barkal**, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 2021.

Ludwig, Ulrike et al. (eds.): **Zeichen der Zukunft. Wahrsagen in Ostasien und Europa, Ausstellung im Germanischen Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg**, Nürnberg: Verlag des Germanischen Nationalmuseums 2021.

Scheliha, Arnulf von: **Geordnete Freiheit. Erwägungen zu den künftigen Aufgaben der Religionspolitik in NRW**, in: Die Gottesfrage in der Universität. Debatten über Religion und Wissenschaft, ed. by Nacke, Stefan et al., pp. 161–174.

MARCH 2021

Jensz, Felicity/ Petterson, Christina (eds.): **Legacies of David Cranz's ‚Historie von Grönland‘ (1765)** (Christianities in the trans-atlantic world), Cham: Palgrave Macmillan 2021.

Khorchide, Mouhanad/ Homolka, Walter: **Umdenken! Wie Islam und Judentum unsere Gesellschaft besser machen**, Freiburg i.Br.: Herder-Verlag 2021.

Seewald, Michael: **Die liturgische Reproduktion der Kirche als Problem dogmatischer Theologie**, in: Gottesdienst und Kirchenbilder. Theologische Neuakzentuierungen (Quaestiones disputatae, vol. 313), ed. by Kopp, Stefan/ Kranemann, Benedikt, pp. 128–143.

Strube, Julian: **Das sozialistische ‚Königreich Gottes auf Erden‘ als Erfüllung der Heilsgeschichte**, in: Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift 37/2021, pp. 140–159.

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Doering, Lutz/ Krause, Andrew R. (eds.): **Synagogues in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods: Archaeological Finds, New Methods, New Theories**, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2020.

Könemann, Judith/ Seewald, Michael (eds.): **Wandel als Thema religiöser Selbstdeutung. Perspektiven aus Judentum, Christentum und Islam** (Quaestiones disputatae, vol. 310), Freiburg i. Br.: Herder Verlag 2021.

Lichtenberger, Achim: **Der Olymp. Sitz der Götter zwischen Himmel und Erde**, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2021.

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Gabriel, Karl: **Die gesellschaftlichen Grundlagen des deutschen Staatskirchenrechts**, in: Handbuch des Staatskirchenrechts der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, ed. by Pirson, Dietrich et al., Berlin: Duncker & Humblot 2020, pp. 67–115.

Pfister, Michael Florian: **Ein Mann der Bibel - Augustin Bea SJ (1881-1968) als Exeget und Rektor des Päpstlichen Bibelinstituts in den 1930er und 1940er Jahren**. Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner 2020.

Wißmann, Hinnerk u. a.: **Why Constitution Matters – Verfassungswissenschaft in Zeiten der Corona-Krise**, in: Juristen Zeitung (JZ) 75/2020, pp. 861-872.

Wittreck, Fabian: **Rechtsschutz der Religionsgemeinschaften durch staatliche Gerichte**, in: Handbuch des Staatskirchenrechts der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, ed. by Pirson, Dietrich et al., Berlin: Duncker & Humblot 2020, pp. 3203–3266.



RESEARCH COMMUNICATION

PRESS REVIEW

Selected contributions on the international survey on identity conflicts in Europe, “Of defenders and explorers”

A study by sociologists Prof. Dr. Detlef Pollack and Dr. Olaf Müller, psychologists Prof. Dr. Mitja Back and Prof. Dr. Gerald Echterhoff, and political scientist Prof. Dr. Bernd Schlipphak: The results of the survey have appeared in around 200 online, print, and broadcast media in Germany and abroad.

Interviews

- **Ein Land, zwei Lager**
(Prof. Dr. Mitja Back, in: Deutschlandfunk Kultur, 18 June 2021)
- **„Wir erleben eine immer intensivere Spirale der Ausgrenzung“**
(Prof. Dr. Bernd Schlipphak, in: Spiegel Plus, 15 July 2021)
- **„Entdecker“ gegen „Verteidiger“**
(Prof. Dr. Mitja Back, in: Deutschlandfunk, 17 June 2021)
- **Herr Back, Herr Echterhoff, welche Identitätskonflikte spalten die Gesellschaft?**
(Prof. Dr. Gerald Echterhoff and Prof. Dr. Mitja Back, in: „Psychologie Heute“, 11 January 2022)
- **Veränderung oder Sicherheit**
(Prof. Dr. Mitja Back, in: Publik-Forum, 3 August 2021)

Print and Online

- **Hier die Verteidiger, dort die Entdecker**
(FAZ, 21 June 2021)
- **Doppelseitige Radikalisierung**
(DIE WELT, 18 June 2021)
- **Studie zu Spaltung der Gesellschaft: Zwei verfestigte Lager**
(dpa-Basisdienst, 17 June 2021)
coverage also in the following newspapers, 17 June 2021: Aachener Zeitung; Aachener Nachrichten; Abendzeitung München; Allgäuer Zeitung; Augsburg Allgemeine; Backnanger Kreiszeitung; Badisches Tagblatt; Berliner Zeitung; Bremer Nachrichten; Die Glocke; Die Rheinpfalz; Dithmarscher Landeszeitung; Der Neue Tag; Dolomiten – Südtiroler Zeitung; Eßlinger Zeitung; Flensburger Tageblatt; Freie Presse; Fuldaer Zeitung; Göttinger Tageblatt; Kreiszeitung Böblingen Bote; Ludwigsburger Kreiszeitung; Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung; Neues Deutschland; Nordkurier; Nordsee-Zeitung; Nürnberger Nachrichten; Nürnberger Zeitung; Offenburger Tageblatt; Passauer Neue Presse; Pforzheimer Zeitung; Pinneberger Tageblatt; Pirmasenser Zeitung; Reutlinger General-Anzeiger; Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung; Rhein-Zeitung; Rüsselsheimer Echo; Saarbrücker Zeitung; Sächsische Zeitung; Schleswig-Holsteinische Landeszeitung; Schwäbische Zeitung; Straubinger Tagblatt; Stuttgarter Nachrichten; Trierischer Volksfreund; Uckermark Kurier; Weser-Kurier
- **Forscher sehen zunehmende Polarisierung in EU-Staaten**
(ZEIT ONLINE, 17 June 2021)
- **Studie zu Spaltung der Gesellschaft: Zwei verfestigte Lager**
(sueddeutsche.de, 17 June 2021)
- **Deutschland in zwei Lager gespalten!**
(Bild.de, 17 June 2021)

- **Streit um Genderstern und Lebensstil: Warum die Parteien auf Identitätskonflikte setzen**
(tagesspiegel.de, 19 June 2021)
- **„Woke-sein ist ein Problem“: Demokraten gehen auf Distanz zu den Linken in der Partei**
(Stern, 12 July 2021)
- **Kommentar: Ist die Spaltung der Gesellschaft noch zu stoppen?**
(Main Post online, 11 September 2021)
- **Welche Identität ist die wahre?**
(Telepolis, 21 June 2021)
- **Nur wenn Baerbock Wahlkampf-Irrtum einsieht, hat sie noch Chancen auf das Kanzleramt**
(FOCUS online, 21 June 2021)
- **Ha valaki nem támogatja a bevándorlást, még nem biztos, hogy a szélsőjobbra szavaz**
(nepszava.hu, 22 June 2021)
- **First empirical evidence of an identity-related societal cleavage**
(phys.org, 17 June 2021)
- **Primeira evidência empírica de uma clivagem social relacionada à identidade**
(maisconhecer.com, 17 June 2021)

Selected media contributions on other themes

Radio and TV

- **Braucht die Welt noch Religion?**
(Prof. Dr. Jan Assmann, in: WDR 5 „Diesseits von Eden“, 7 February 2021)
- **Identitätspolitik? Wie viel darf es sein?**
(Prof. Dr. Mouhanad Khorchide and Prof. Dr. Detlef Pollack, in: WDR5 „Diesseits von Eden“, 25 April 2021, from min. 17:21)
- **Kein Agieren auf Augenhöhe**
(Prof. Dr. Michael Seewald, in: Deutschlandfunk Kultur, 21 March 2021)
- **In die Zukunft schauen, wenn man die Gegenwart nur schwer aushält**
(Prof. Dr. Ulrike Ludwig, in: RBB Kultur, 29 December 2021)
- **Das Gutachten über den Umgang mit Missbrauchsfällen im Erzbistum Köln**
(Prof. Dr. Klaus Große Kracht, in: 3Sat „Kulturzeit“, 18 March 2021, from min. 14:09)
- **Religionspolitische Fragen vor Bundestagswahl, Teil 1: kirchliche Lobbyarbeit**
(Prof. Dr. Ulrich Willems, in: Deutschlandfunk „Tag für Tag“, 14 September 2021)
- **Parlamentarier mit Theologiestudium: Das Forschungsprojekt „TheoParl“**
(Prof. Dr. Arnulf von Scheliha and Uta Hohmann, in: Deutschlandfunk „Tag für Tag“, 3 March 2021)
- **Hass kommt von hetzen**
(Prof. Dr. Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf, in: Radioeins RBB, 12 June 2021)
- **Islamwissenschaftler Bauer über Mehrdeutigkeit**
(Prof. Dr. Thomas Bauer, in: ORF „Im Gespräch“, 27 August 2021)
- **Religionen im Wandel**
(Prof. Dr. Perry Schmidt-Leukel, in: WDR 5, Neugier genügt, 30 August 2021)

- **Moralsatire „Das Narrenschiff“**
(Prof. Dr. Bruno Quast, in: Deutschlandfunk „Aus Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften“, 6 May 2021)
- **Wird der Tod politisiert?**
(Prof. Dr. Michael Grünbart, in: Domradio, 2 November 2021)
- **Was es mit der Kulturgeschichte des Olymp auf sich hat**
(Prof. Dr. Achim Lichtenberger, in: Domradio, 24 July 2021)
- **Soziales Misstrauen ist ein Nährboden für Verschwörungstheorien**
(Prof. Dr. Bernd Schlipphak, in: SWR 2 „Wissen“, 31 May 2021)
- **Kein getreues Abbild der Bevölkerung**
(Prof. Dr. Armin Schäfer, in: Deutschlandfunk Kultur, 3 February 2021)

Guest contributions and Interviews

- **„Das Christentum ist auf dem Rückzug“**
(Prof. Dr. Detlef Pollack, in: NZZ online, 25 December 2021)
- **Blicke über den Rand der Welt**
(Prof. Dr. Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf, in: FAZ, 14 October 2021)
- **Un islam des Lumières européen est-il un doux rêve ou une bonne idée?**
(Prof. Dr. Mouhanad Khorchide, in: Le Figaro online, 11 February 2021)
- **Versuch über den Federstrich**
(Prof. Dr. Karin Westerwelle, in: FAZ, 15 December 2021)
- **Identität ist Unzufriedenheit mit sich**
(Prof. Dr. Mouhanad Khorchide and Prof. Dr. Detlef Pollack, in: FAZ, 9 April 2021)
- **Der Sozialreformer im Zwielficht**
(Prof. Dr. Olaf Blaschke, in: Westfälische Nachrichten, 15 July 2021)

Print and Online

- **Books of the Year 2021**
(Prof. Dr. Thomas Bauer, in: Times Literary Supplement, 26 November 2021)
- **Vernehmst also Catos Wort nicht!**
(Prof. Dr. Jan Assmann, Prof. Dr. Ludwig Siep, Dr. Marcel Bubert, Prof. Dr. Karin Westerwelle, in: FAZ, 10 March 2021)
- **Erinnerung auf die Ohren**
(Prof. Dr. Regina Grundmann, Prof. Dr. Katrin Kogman-Appel, Prof. Dr. Lutz Doering and Viola van Melis, in: Jüdische Allgemeine, 14 October 2021)
- **„Das Unsichtbare verunsichert zutiefst“**
(Prof. Dr. Wagner-Egelhaaf, PD Dr. Pia Doering, Dr. Katharina Wolff, Prof. Dr. Eva-Bettina Krems, Prof. Dr. Jens Niebaum, Prof. Dr. Dorothea Schulz, in: Westfälische Nachrichten Münster-Stadt, 6 February 2021)

- **Vom Judaskuss bis zum Whistleblowing**
(PD Dr. André Krischer, in: damals.de, 21 September 2021)
- **„Für die Taliban ist die Scharia die einzige legitime Gesellschaftsordnung“**
(Prof. Dr. Mouhanad Khorchide, in: Spiegel Online, 4 September 2021)
- **1700 Jahre jüdisches Leben**
(Podcast “Zugehörig oder ausgegrenzt? 1.700 Jahre jüdisches Leben in Deutschland” des Exzellenzclusters „Religion und Politik“, in: GESCHICHTE 10|2021)
- **Die populistische Versuchung**
(Prof. Dr. Armin Schäfer, in: taz.de, 30 March 2021)
- **Die heilige Greta?**
(Prof. Dr. Doris Fuchs, in: Christ & Welt, 22 July 2021)
- **„Kirche braucht Gewaltenteilung“**
(Prof. Dr. Hubert Wolf and Prof. Dr. Michael Seewald, in: Westdeutsche Allgemeine WAZ – Zeitung für Essen-Rüttenscheid, 15 February 2021)
- **Gegen alle Absolutheitsansprüche**
(Dr. habil. Dina El Omari, in: FAZ, 16 March 2021)
- **Erste Ergebnisse zu Missbrauch im Bistum Münster vorgelegt**
(Prof. Dr. Thomas Großbölting and Prof. Dr. Klaus Große Kracht, in: KNA Basisdienst, 20 November 2021)
- **Gebete in Garagen**
(Prof. Dr. Mouhanad Khorchide and Prof. Dr. Christel Gärtner, in: SPIEGEL PLUS, 19 March 2021)
- **Was sagen die neuen Akten über Papst Pius XII.?**
(Prof. Dr. Hubert Wolf, in: FAZ, 4 July 2021)
- **Woran du dein Herz hängst**
(Prof. Dr. Detlef Pollack and Carolin Hillenbrand, in: ZEIT online, 30 March 2021)
- **Der Olymp: Von Göttern bevölkert, aber menschenleer**
(Prof. Dr. Achim Lichtenberger, in: archaologie-online.de, 19 March 2021)
- **Archaeologists reveal Roman sanctuary in ancient Doliche**
(Prof. Dr. Engelbert Winter, in: Heritage Daily, 29 October 2021)
- **Was Wolfgang Thierse von schwarz angemalten Satire-Figuren hält**
(Prof. Dr. Mouhanad Khorchide and Prof. Dr. Detlef Pollack, in: Neue Westfälische online, 22 April 2021)

TRANSFER-NEWS



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Training programme in “religious journalism”

The first nationwide training programme in “Religious Journalism”, run by the Cluster of Excellence and the ifp School of Journalism, dealt in 2021 with international conflicts in the name of God, as well as with dialogue and conflict between religious communities. The programme also addressed questions of tradition and innovation, and introduced participants to the history and present state of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The programme gives participants from media outlets all over Germany the chance to discuss issues with actors from politics, religion, and the media.

The Cluster of Excellence aims with this programme to strengthen specialist and academic journalism in the field of religion. Speakers at the training programme have so far included researchers from the Cluster of Excellence such as Thomas Bauer, Ulrich Willems, Michael Seewald, Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, Perry Schmidt-Leukel, and Dina El Omari, as well as representatives from politics, law, religions, and the media such as Dieter Grimm, Seyran Ateş, Volker Beck, Konstantin von Notz, Lars Castellucci, Claudia Nothelle, Julian Chaim Soussan, Zekeriya Altuğ, Christiane Florin, Evelyn Finger, and Matthias Drobinski.

[Read more](#)



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Anniversary programme in 2023 to celebrate 375 years of the Peace of Westphalia

The year 2023 marks the 375th anniversary of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. In the anniversary programme, the city of Münster and the University will also consider the time after 1648, and investigate what happened once the negotiations ended. The Cluster of Excellence will participate in the programme with events on “Societies after the War”. The anniversary programme is organized by the Alliance for Science, to which the University of Münster and the Cluster belong, and by its “Dialogues on Peace” working group. [Read more](#)



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500 years of Bible translation

Martin Luther’s translation of the New Testament will be 500 years old in 2022, and, to mark the anniversary, the University of Münster will be participating with the cities of Münster and Eisenach and other partners in the “Festival of Language” in September 2022. The Cluster of Excellence organizes a panel involving the church historian Prof. Dr. Hubert Wolf and the Protestant theologian Prof. Dr. Holger Strutwolf that will deal with the question, “What language does God speak?”. [Read more](#)



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TED-talk on “Campus of Religions”

At the TEDx-talk in Münster, the Islamic theologian Prof. Dr. Mouhanad Khorchide and the Catholic theologian Prof. Dr. Johannes Schnocks, both from the Cluster of Excellence, spoke about the Campus of Religions in Münster. In their talk, they discussed the importance of the campus for interreligious dialogue. From 2023, it will bring together the various theologies and institutions of non-denominational religious research at the University of Münster, and become a place of exchange for representatives from academia, politics, religious and non-religious communities, and non-governmental organizations, as well as from the media, culture, and the arts.

[Read more](#)



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Web dossier on religious interpretations of epidemics

Epidemics from antiquity to the present day: in the web dossier “Epidemics: Perspectives from Cultural Studies”, researchers from the Cluster of Excellence illuminate how epidemics have been represented in the media and various kinds of art, with the section “God’s Will/God’s Support? Religious interpretations of epidemics” tracing religious interpretations of epidemics as they can be read in textual testimonies and images from previous and more devout centuries. Researchers also turn their gaze to contemporary Africa. [Read more](#)



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Questions of religious policy for the 2021 Bundestag election

Scholars from the Cluster of Excellence talk about questions of religious policy in the upcoming Bundestag elections in a three-part series of the programme “Tag für Tag” (Day by Day) on the radio station Deutschlandfunk. The political scientist Prof. Dr. Ulrich Willems takes a look at church lobbying, the Catholic theologian Prof. Dr. Judith Könemann deals with the question “Does politics still need religion?”, and sociologist Prof. Dr. Marc Helbling, former Hans Blumenberg Visiting Professor at the Cluster, discusses religious policy as integration policy. [Read more](#)



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Podcast series “Belonging or Excluded? 1,700 years of Jewish life in Germany”

In the podcast series “Belonging or Excluded?”, researchers from the Cluster of Excellence and the Institute for Jewish Studies such as Prof. Dr. Regina Grundmann and Prof. Dr. Katrin Kogman-Appel report on the everyday and religious life, as well as history of persecution, of Jews from antiquity to the present. The series is part of the nationwide year of celebration, “1,700 years of Jewish life in Germany”. [Read more](#)



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Research Podcast “Religion and Politics”

Researchers from the Cluster of Excellence report on their work in interdisciplinary religious research in a way that is personal, topical, and accessible. Religious ideas about life after death, the mountain of the gods, Olympus, and the history of treason – the researchers cover a wide range of themes, disciplines, and epochs in the humanities and social sciences. The podcast accompanies each annual theme at the Cluster of Excellence. [Read more](#)



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Legal scholar Peter Oestmann on 70 years of the Federal Constitutional Court

For legal scholar Prof. Dr. Peter Oestmann from the Cluster of Excellence, 70 years of the Federal Constitutional Court (BVerfG) have been a success story. In the University of Münster podcast, he talked about the founding and development of Germany’s highest constitutional court. He also classified the filling of judgeships, took a stand on criticism of the institution, and described the relationship between the BVerfG and European examples. [Read more](#)



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Artefacts in the 3D scanner

In the video series “Labs at the University of Münster”, the University is showing how a laser scanner can be used to take 3D measurements of exhibits in the Archaeological Museum. The non-contact and object-friendly procedure makes the artefacts accessible to experts from their offices worldwide, and ensures that millennia-old cultural objects are preserved digitally. Researchers from the Cluster of Excellence also use the mobile scanner during excavations and in their teaching. [Read more](#)



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The Cluster of Excellence in social media

The Cluster of Excellence continuously disseminates news on research findings, events, publications, media contributions, and awards via Twitter and Instagram. If you have not yet done so, follow the Cluster’s social media channels:

[The Cluster of Excellence on Twitter \(@religionpolitik\)](#)

[The Cluster of Excellence on Instagram \(@religionundpolitik\)](#)

CLUSTER OF EXCELLENCE “RELIGION AND POLITICS”

The Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics. Dynamics of Tradition and Innovation” has been investigating since 2007 the complex relationship between religion and politics across eras and cultures. The 140 researchers from 20 disciplines in the humanities and social sciences focus in the funding phase (2019 to 2025) on the “dynamics of tradition and innovation”. They analyze in transepochal studies ranging from antiquity to the present day the conditions and factors that make religion an engine of political and social change, with their focus being above all on the paradox that religions often develop their innovative potential precisely by drawing on their traditions. The researchers concentrate on the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and on their polytheistic precursors. The focus of interest is on Europe and the Mediterranean region, as well as on their entanglements with the Near East, Africa, North and Latin America.

The research network is the largest of its kind in Germany; and, of the Clusters of Excellence, one of the oldest and the only one to deal with the issue of religion. It will receive funding of 31 million euros from 2019 to 2025.

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