

The **INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS (IAHR)** is a worldwide body of national and regional member and affiliate associations and societies dedicated to the academic study of religion. It was founded in 1950 at the 7th International Congress of the History of Religions in Amsterdam and has since grown to 42 national and 6 regional member associations and societies as well as 4 affiliated societies, reflecting the international and global character and scope of the association. The IAHR organizes a World Congress every five years and sponsors regional and special conferences in many parts of the world. The IAHR seeks to promote the activities of all scholars, member and affiliate associations and societies who contribute to the historical, social, and comparative study of religion.




The **GERMAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS (DVRW)** is the German affiliate association to the International Association for the History of Religions. The DVRW aims to promote the academic study of religions at German universities and towards a wider public via conferences, publications, awards and workshops. Founded in 1951 as the Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionsgeschichte, it has today more than 350 members, putting emphasis especially on the support of younger scholars. Its biannual conferences open up new

fields of research to scholars from historical and contemporary, European as well as non-European fields of study. Being the national body of Religionswissenschaft (the Study of Religions) in Germany, the DVRW has been chosen to host the XXI Quinquennial IAHR World Congress in Erfurt, Germany, together with the local organizing committee.



The IAHR 2015 World Congress partners with myclimate to aim at a net zero carbon footprint. Myclimate is a Swiss-based foundation supporting and developing worldwide projects to reduce CO2 emissions. It aims to protect our climate and sponsor sustainable development. All international projects of myclimate conform to strict Gold Standard® guidelines and are subject to UN inspection. A Green Fee will be included in the Congress fee to support myclimate-sponsored projects.



 facebook.com/pages/International-Association-for-the-History-of-Religions-IAHR-2015

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Lying in the heart of Germany, Erfurt is easily reached by air and rail. Direct hourly highspeed trains connect Erfurt and Frankfurt International Airport, the main German travel hub between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m., as well as Leipzig and Berlin airports between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. A 24-hour public transport system directly links the train station and university campus. All hotels are within easy walking distance to tram stations. The IAHR World Congress 2015 Organizing Committee will provide a Congress Airline offering discount flights to and from Frankfurt Airport. Follow the link on our website starting September 2014 to book your flight.



Bilder: Erfurt Wedding Ring: Museum "Alte Synagoge", Erfurt. Source: Stadtverwaltung Erfurt and Papenfuss Atelier für Gestaltung. Copyright: Thüringisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie, B. Stefan; sxc.hu; V. Bernabei, manteca, tatlin

www.uni-erfurt.de/iahr
www.iahr2015.org

Universität Erfurt
 Nordhäuser Straße 63
 99089 Erfurt
iahr@uni-erfurt.de



XXI World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions

**Dynamics of Religions
 Past and Present**

Erfurt, Germany | August 23 – 29, 2015



DYNAMICS OF RELIGIONS: PAST AND PRESENT

Religion is a human, historical, social and cultural phenomenon. As such, religious ideas, practices, discourses, institutions, and social expressions are constantly in processes of change. The Congress will address the processes of change, the dynamics of religions past, present, and future, on several interconnected levels of analysis and theory, namely that of the individual, community and society, practices and discourses, beliefs, and narrations.

These will be addressed within four areas:

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN SOCIETY: ADAPTATION AND TRANSFORMATION

Embedded within complex cultures, characterized by social change and intercultural exchange, religious communities constantly adapt to their changing environments, developing practices, discourses, and institutions conceptualized as “religion”. These concepts are subject to social and cultural influences. They also shape political and economic environments. Religious traditions are invented and reinvented, imperceptibly transformed, violently reformed or emphatically defended. How, then, do religious communities and institutions adapt to cultural change? How do they affect social change? Does interreligious contact and dialogue lead to religious change? How do religious communities react to the possibilities and threats of new media? Does globalization transform public religions? To what extent do states and public law affect religions?

PRACTICES AND DISCOURSES: INNOVATION AND TRADITION

Founding figures, schisms and revivals characterize the dynamics of religion in past and present. Institutions develop or are dissolved. This, again, poses questions: How are religious traditions established, standardized and canonized? What are the mechanisms and agents of religious innovation? How do religious traditions repel religious change? How is sacred time and space established? Does religious individualization lead to innovation? What are the mechanisms of transformation and innovation of rituals and other practices? Do rituals create and perpetuate religious traditions? Are new religious movements or esoteric currents innovative? Does fundamentalism protect religious traditions? Does the internet lead to religious innovation? What are the dynamics of gender traditions?

THE INDIVIDUAL: RELIGIOSITY, SPIRITUALITIES AND INDIVIDUALIZATION

Individuals, too, are agents of change. Privatization, patchwork religiosity and religious deviance are not restricted to the present. Can “religiosity” or “spirituality”, popular in many contemporary self-descriptions, be used as descriptive terms of our metalanguage? Under what circumstances do individuals obey or deny religious traditions? How and why do individuals converse, or gradually change their religious convictions and affiliations? How can plural religious identities or patchwork religiosities be explained, what effects do they have on re-

ligious traditions? How important are religious experiences in religions?

What are individual reasons for religious deviance? How do religions control the individual? Is the privatization of religion a modern phenomenon? Do biographic developments explain individual religiosity?

METHODOLOGY: REPRESENTATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Religious change is registered and narrated by outsiders and insiders. Emic representations influence academic interpretations. Scholarly paradigms and theories are therefore as dynamic as their object. Which master narratives about religious change need to be revised? What is the current status of the secularization debate? Is there some scientific value in old paradigms of religious change (e.g. decline, fall, rise, axial age)? How can theories of cultural and religious evolution be applied in historical sciences? How do new approaches in historiography conceptualize religious change (e.g. entangled or trans-cultural history, postcolonial history, discourse analysis, cognitive approaches)?

Proposals for panels and papers within and across the areas outlined are welcome. Deadlines will be announced on the Congress website.

The **UNIVERSITY OF ERFURT** was founded in 1379 as one of the earliest universities of Germany. Reopening its doors in 1994 with the two key research focus areas “Education” and “Religion”, it offers high quality education, placing especial emphasis on interdisciplinary studies. Erfurt is one of the top German research universities for the Study of Religion, attracting internationally distinguished scholars and numerous research programs, including funding by the German Research Foundation and the European Research Council.

The **CITY OF ERFURT**, situated in the heart of Europe in Thuringia, Germany, is of central importance to the history of the Protestant reformation, hosting Martin Luther in the Augustinerkloster, Erfurt, and at Wartburg Castle, Eisenach, where he translated the New Testament into the vernacular. Furthermore, the city in which Meister Eckhart lived and taught was a center of Christian mysticism in the 14th century, and is today one of the best-preserved sites of medieval Central European Judaism (UNESCO world heritage status applied for). Johann Sebastian Bach and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe contributed to its rich cultural heritage in music and literature at the center of Weimar classicism. At the same time, it is a paradigm for a post-socialist, de-Christianized region with a long tradition of critique of religion and secular humanism. The Congress cooperates with Thuringia Tourism to offer a rich and varied cultural program for the Congress.

