



Conference

The Past in the Future: History of Religion\

Thursday 25 and Friday 26 January 2024

Aula (G-01) Rämistrasse 59, Zürich



Stockphoto combined with stamp seal from Lachish (mid 18th–mid 16th c. BCE), depicting a branch goddess. Photo by: Ben Greet, Copyright: SSSL/British Museum

About the conference

Throughout the last twenty years, the historical study of religion\’s has faced fundamental challenges. “History,” Christoph Uehlinger observed in 2006, is no longer included as separate entry in some recent handbooks. This absence seems to correspond to “a regrettable tendency among students of religion to confound factual knowledge about rites and symbols (*Religionskunde*) with history of religion (*Religionsgeschichte*)” (Uehlinger 2006, 380). An earlier examination of relevant publications likewise showed “the vanishing of ‘history’ from religious studies” (Kippenberg 2000, 221). Nowadays, the history of religion\’s has to face multiple challenges, like the profound questioning of our most central concepts, a pluralization (and fragmentation) of the discipline, and limited success in communicating specific academic insights to a larger audience of scholars and the general public.

In this conference, we look ahead and ask questions about the future of the study of the religious past(s). What is the role of comparison, for example, and how are specific types of history writing, like micro- and global- histories, placed in conversation with large questions about religious continuity and change? Which challenges of the last decades have been met sufficiently, and which remain open for innovative answers? This conference presents ideas about how historians of religion\’s can contribute to the development of the discipline, and offer valuable insights for academic scholarship in other fields.

Registration (before 11 January) at schirin.ghazivakili@rws.uzh.ch or online via <https://www.ema.uzh.ch/RVK4M> or the QR-code.



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Program

Thursday, January 25, 2024 (I)

09:00–09:15 Welcome and greeting by *Dorothea Lüddeckens*

Session 1 – Chair: *Mattias Brand*

09:20–10:00 *Isabel Laack* – The Future of the History of Religion/s. Searching for Epistemological Commonalities and Societal Relevance

10:00–10:40 *Jason Storm* – Historicizing the History of Religions and Beyond

Coffee break

Session 2 – Chair: TBA

11:00–11:40 *Annelies Lannoy* and *Corinne Bonnet*– Seeing Isis Now, Then, and Forever: Utopian Visions of Humanity and the Study of Ancient Mysticism in Post-WWI History of Religions

11:40–12:20 TBA – Predicting the Future: Four Ideas on Future Theories in the History of Religion\s

Lunch break

Session 3 – Chair: *Monika Amsler*

14:00–14:40 *Joseph E. Sanzo* – "Blurred," "Fluid," and "Messy"? Critical Reflections on Metaphors for Religious Boundaries in Late Antique Studies

14:40–15:20 *Daniel Barbu* – Before Idolatry: Ancient and (Early) Modern Theories of Religion

Coffee break

Session 4 – Chair: *Schirin Ghazivakili*

15:40–16:20 *Stefan Krauter* – Words for Eternity

16:20–18:00 *Break*

Thursday, January 25, 2024 (II)

18:00	Opening by <i>Dorothea Lüddeckens</i>
18:00–18:30	Laudatio by <i>Ulrich Rudolph</i>
18:45–20:15	Keynote <i>Jörg Rüpke</i> –A Global History of Religion? Provocations and Perspectives of the Past of a Discipline
20:30–21:00	<i>Apéro riche (after registration)</i>

Friday, January 26, 2024

	Session 5 – Chair: <i>Farida Stickel</i>
09:00–09:40	<i>Bernd Christian Otto</i> – Practitioner-scholarship and the Co-production of Knowledge in the Study of Esotericism
09:40–10:20	<i>Andrea Rota</i> – Activism, Criticism, Theory: On the Future of Systematic Reflection in the Study of Religion
	<i>Coffee break</i>
10:40–11:20	<i>Anne Ingvild S. Gilhus</i> – The Future of Comparison and the Study of Ancient Religion
11:20–12:00	Closing remarks by <i>Christoph Uehlinger</i>
	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30	End of Conference
