

**GEORG-AUGUST-UNIVERSITÄT
GÖTTINGEN**

International Conference

Europe and the migration of Christian communities from the Middle East

Brenkhausen, Goettingen

September, 27-29, 2021

Rationale

Religious exchange between Europe and the Middle East has taken place on many occasions over the centuries. This is mostly due to migration, either for political or religious reasons. In light of the recent migration movements from the Middle East, especially from Syria, Iraq, and Turkey, Europe is now facing the new challenge of integrating religious and political minorities into their cultural systems. Our conference aims to explore the broad variety of reasons for migration movements as seen currently and in the past, particularly focusing on Christian minorities and their experiences of religious fragmentation and suffering.

Main Topics

Our conference will examine several topics related to the ethnic and religious conflicts currently observed including research, analysis and conflict resolution. The agenda also includes debates on multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies as well as newly emerging threats such as the influence of the global Covid-19 pandemic.

The session on Christian communities from the Middle East will provide the participants with an in-depth analysis of the current situation of Christian migrant communities in Europe. A special emphasis will be put on flexibility in adapting the new cultural systems including difficulties and benefits for both parties. The research reports will explore the representation of migrant communities in politics, education and media. The discussion will delve deeper into the questions of how Christian minorities and their experiences of

war and trauma can be integrated into their refuge country and how religious fragmentation can be overcome.

The agenda also includes:

- insights on the current situation of Christians in Europe by Heleen Murre-van den Berg, Professor for Comparative religious studies from the Radboud University, Nijmegen
- Markus Meckel, former foreign minister of the GDR, as a key-note speaker
- Presentation of the Coptic-Orthodox Monastery at Brenkhausen and direct insights into Christian minority life in Germany by Bishop Damian

Call for papers

The conference will result in a book printed after the meeting.

We invite paper that examine one or more aspects of the conference theme and related areas.

Key dates

A registration form and the paper titles with short abstracts (max. 500 words) and key words (max. 5) due by **15 May 2021**

More information on the conference and logistics will be circulated by **June 2021**

Collection of scientific articles for publication due by **1 October 2021**

Conference will take place **27 – 29 September 2021**

For any questions, please contact Lorenz Garbe (German, English),

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Zoom-Link: <https://uni-goettingen.zoom.us/j/91673032361?pwd=RlBhYlJvREl4UW5reXdPejE3ZnVidz09>

26 September (Sunday)

Arrival in Göttingen

On voluntary basis we'll offer a guided City-Tour through Göttingen.

27 September (Monday)

12:00	Opening of the Conference (Aula)
	<i>Prof. Martin Tamcke, University of Göttingen</i> <i>Prof. Herman Teule, University Leuven</i> <i>Prof. Peter Gemeinhardt, Dean of the Protestant Faculty, University of Göttingen</i> <i>Markus Meckel, former Foreign Minister of the GDR</i> <i>Dr. Egbert Schlarb, University of Marburg</i> <i>Bishop Anba Damian, Coptic Monastery Brenkhausen</i> <i>Dr. Alla Akulshina, Coordinator of the POWERS Network, Head of the International Office, University of Voronezh</i>
13:30	Reception
14:30	Departure to Monastery Brenkhausen

The monastery in Brenkhausen was a former Cistercian monastery, founded 1245. It is well known for the three-aisled church and the baroque altar. Since 1993 it is the residence of the Coptic Orthodox Bishop of Germany. The cloister offers hospitalization, a bible museum and the opportunity to live together with the monks.

16:00	Guided Tour through the monastery by Bishop Damian
17:00	Plenary Session I - Christian migration experiences from the Middle East to Europe
	<i>Chair: Prof. Heleen Murre van-den Berg, University of Nijmegen</i>

	<p>A new home in Europe – memories of the arrival of the first Syrian Orthodox Christians in Germany <i>PD Dr. Kai Merten, University of Marburg</i></p> <p>Challenges of Religious Conversion in an Asylum Setting: Conversion to Christianity during the European Migration Crisis <i>PhD Sevgi Cilingir, University of Izmir</i></p> <p>The integration trajectory of orthodox greek refugees in mainland Greece <i>Sinem Abka, University of Izmir</i></p>
18:30	Dinner
19:30	Evening Key Note
	<p>Rewriting Global Orthodoxy: Oriental Christians in Europe between 1970 and 2020 <i>Prof. Heleen Murre-van den Berg, University of Nijmegen</i></p>

28 September (Tuesday)

7:30	Breakfast
8:00	Registration of the participants
8:30	Plenary Session II – Modern Orthodoxy in Europe
	<p><i>Chair: Prof. Paolo Bargiacchi, University of Enna</i></p> <p>From marginalized village communities in Southeastern Turkey to an established church parish in Germany: The example of the Syriac Orthodox Church in Herne from 1960-2020 <i>Jan Gehm, University of Nijmegen</i></p> <p>Coptic traditions' digitization in francophone Europe <i>Gaétan du Roy, University of Nijmegen</i></p> <p>Keeping the Textual Traditions in a Modern Age: the Case of the Coptic Orthodox Community in the Netherlands <i>Matija Miličić, University of Nijmegen</i></p>
10:00	Coffe-Break

10:15	Plenary Session III – Rewriting Global Orthodoxy
	<p>Chair: Stanislau Paulau, Leibniz Institute of European History in Mainz</p> <p>“Their Compatriot St. Servatius”: Armenian Hagiographic Emplacement in Europe Dr. Chris Sheklian, University of Nijmegen</p> <p>Tending the flock through ‘Tewahdo_WhatsApp’: between adaptation & preservation Habtom Yohannes, University of Nijmegen</p> <p>The integration policy of Russia towards the migrants’ children: challenges and prospects (an example of migrants from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Armenia) Nathalia Zhurbina, University of Voronezh</p> <p>Bishop Samuel and the Coptic community in Diaspora Prof. Pieterella van Doorn-Harder, Wake Forest University and the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam</p>
12:15	Lunch
13:15	Plenary Session IV – Migration, Flight and Integration
	<p>Chair: Dr. Dagmar Heller, Denominational Institute Bensheim</p> <p>Migration of the Malankara Orthodox (Syrian) Christians to Europe and to the United Kingdom Fr. Dr. Baby Varghese, India</p> <p>Migration and Integration of Armenian-Orthodox Christians in the Old/New Diaspora Dr. Harutyun Harutyunyan, American University of Yerevan</p> <p>Migration from Ethiopia as a reaction to unsolved conflicts and a thirst for future Prof. Wolbert Smidt, University of Mekelle</p> <p>Minority, Cosmopolitan, Migration and stateless person? Petros Makaris attempt to explain his identities Prof. Martin Tamcke, University of Göttingen</p>
15:15	Coffe-Break

16:00	Plenary Session V – Migration and the reaction in the destiny countries
	<p>Chair: Franco Burgio, European Commission Bruxelles</p> <p>No Place for “Arabs and Turks”? German Public Discourse on Migration from the Middle East Dr. Lars Klein, University of Göttingen</p> <p>Perspectives on “the Islam” in interviews with Christians about flight and displacement in times of the so-called Islamic State Dr. Claudia Rammelt, University of Bochum</p> <p>Flight, eviction and hostage of assyrian Christians from the Valley Goran. A personal report by Abdo Mirza Leonie Wingberg, Paul Seebaß, Leonard Stinsky, Eva/Hanna Holthuis, University of Göttingen</p> <p>Migration in the public agenda of identitarian movement Prof. Liubov Fadeeva, University of Perm</p>
18:00	Dinner
19:30	Evening Key Note
	<p>Diaspora and Homeland. A difficult Interaction. The case of the Syriac Churches Prof. Dr. Herman Teule, University of Louvain</p>

29 September (Wednesday)

9:00	Breakfast
10:00	Coordinating meeting of the Erasmus+ JM Network “Peace, War and the World in European Security Challenges – POWERS”
	<p>Chair: Dr. Alla Akulshina, Coordinator of the POWERS Network, Head of the International Office, Voronezh State University</p> <p><i>Participation is limited to the POWERS Network partners</i></p>
12:00	Lunch

Departure of the participants (if you like to stay a night longer, do not hesitate to contact the conference manager)