Everyday experience demonstrates that offenses, swearing and abusive language tend to involve explicit or implicit comparisons. Within the history of religion, the phenomenon is similarly familiar: Bad Christians were accused of being like – or worse than – Turks or Jews, Jews were admonished not to fall so low as to behave like Christians and so on. Studying such comparisons, we set out to explore the relationship between polemics, orders of knowledge, and concepts of religion. Bringing together scholars of different religious traditions and periods, the conference proposes to take an interdisciplinary and systematic view on religious diversity and polemical comparison. The papers trace polemical comparisons from Late Antiquity to modern times and across Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist discourses.

Organizers

Dr. Christina Brauner
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SFB 1288 “Practices of Comparing”
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Junior-Prof. Dr. Sita Steckel
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Dilthey project “Diversitas Religionum. Thirteenth-century Foundations of European Discourses of Religious Diversity”
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Venue

Universität Bielefeld, Universitätsstr. 25,
Gebäude X, A2-103

International Conference
Behaving Like Heathens?
Polemical Comparisons and Discourses of Religious Diversity across the Cultures
Bielefeld
29 November – 1 December 2018
THURSDAY 29 NOVEMBER

13.00 Arrival & Get together
13.30 Christina Braun, HU Berlin / Univ. Bielefeld & Sita Steckel, WWU Münster
Welcome & Introduction

SESSION I

THE ARMOURY OF COMPARISON. MORPHOLOGIES OF RELIGIOUS POLEMICS
Chair: Silke Schwandt, Universität Bielefeld

14.00 David Freidenreich, Colby College
Instructing Christians by Constructing “Jew-ish” Muslims: Case Studies in Medieval Rhetoric about the Old Testament

14.45 Martin Przybilski, Universität Trier
Hypersexuality in Jewish-Christian Polemics

15.30 Coffee

Alexander Kästner, TU Dresden
Mocking monks and saints. The invective mode of the early Reformation in Annaberg and Buchholz, 1522-24

16.00 Markus Viehebeck, Universität Wien
Polemics as Literary and Conceptual Framework: A Case Study from Nineteenth-Century Tibet

16.45 Coffee

17.30 Conference Dinner
Bernstein, Niederwall 2, 33602 Bielefeld

FRIDAY 30 NOVEMBER

SESSION II

POLEMICAL COMPARISONS AND ORGANIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE
Chair: Andra Alexiu, WWU Münster

9.15 Mónica Colominas Aparicio,
MPI History of Science, Berlin
Comparison and Religious Polemics in Late Medieval and Early Modern Christian Iberia: A Hitherto Unknown Mudejar-Morisco Source

10.00 Anna Akasoy,
The Graduate Center, CUNY, New York
Religious Polemics and Beyond: Paganism in Medieval Islamic Literature

10.45 Coffee

Karoly Daniel Dobos, Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem, Budapest
Portrayals of Jesus in Medieval Jewish Polemical Writings and the Birth of ‘The Quest for the Historical Jesus’ in the Ghetto of Venice

11.15 Lunch (Mensa)

SESSION III (CONTINUED)

Chair: Willibald Steinmetz, Universität Bielefeld

9.00 Stephen C. Berkowitz, Missouri State University
Buddhist ‘Heretics’ and the Logic of Lineage

9.45 Malte van Spankeren, Halle/Saale
Insult as a Cultural Practice. The Confessional Polemical Functionalisation of Islam by Lutheran Theologians around 1600

10.30 Coffee

11.00 Concluding discussion
Discussants: Marco Carvarzere

12.00 (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt/Main), Antje Flüchter (Universität Bielefeld), Almut Höfter (Universität Oldenburg)