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## CLUSTER OF EXCELLENCE “RELIGION AND POLITICS”

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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.

In the funding phase from 2019 to 2025, the 140 researchers from 20 disciplines in the humanities and social sciences analyze in transepochal studies ranging from antiquity to the present day the factors that make religion the motor of political and social change. 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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### ORGANISATION

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#### Exzellenzcluster „Religion und Politik“

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### LOCATION

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Hörsaalgebäude des Exzellenzclusters

Raum JO 102 (1. OG)

Johannisstraße 4, 48143 Münster

#### Registration

Register by 20 February to

[pomeroy@uni-muenster.de](mailto:pomeroy@uni-muenster.de)

Conference of the Cluster of Excellence  
“Religion and Politics”

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# EARLY CHRISTIANITY AND THE POLITICAL THEOLOGY OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER

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22–23 February 2024



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## PROGRAMM

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Thursday, 22 February 2024

17.00 **Keynote**  
**Early Christianity and the Ends of International Order**  
*William Bain*  
*(National University of Singapore)*  
**Light Reception**

Friday, 23 February 2024

09.00–10.00 **Ethnē, Angels, and International Order in Early Christianity**  
*Samuel Pomeroy (Münster)*

10.15–11.15 **God's Action and the Cosmic order. Themistius' Theological and Political Thought**  
*Elisa Coda (Pisa)*

11.30–12.30 **Empire and Political Theology, Past and Present: Harnack, Schmitt and Peterson on Reichstheologie**  
*Marco Rizzi (Milan)*

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## EARLY CHRISTIANITY AND THE POLITICAL THEOLOGY OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER

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Early Christianity and the Political Theology of International Order“ is a two-day event composed of an invited keynote lecture by renowned international political theorist William Bain (National University of Singapore) and an Expert Response Panel. The lecture and seminar aim to place pre-modern Christian ideas and texts into dialogue with recent developments in the theory of international order. Bain’s 2020 book (Political Theology of International Order, Oxford 2020) identified debates within 13th-century scholastic theology as instructive for viewing the dominant paradigms of imposed versus immanent order in international relations.

Our configuration of nation-states reflects not an order that conforms to reason but is the result of discreet actors freely entering contracts on the basis of their own material interests. These models relate directly to how the scholastic theologians debated God, His will, reason, nature, and the ordering of creation. Bain thus identified a range of key terms and images that

can be resourced within the panorama of Christian theology for their contribution to paradigms of persons, societies, and nations in relation. This event seeks to assess the role of early Christian thought within such an investigation.

While this work has put theology on the map, so to speak, of international political theory, it raises the question of what eras of Christian history prior to medieval scholasticism offer instructive analogues for understanding theories of international order. Further, if, as Bain suggests, the contemporary international order is a pale, secularized voluntary construct, then does the Judeo-Christian tradition offer any resources for thinking about order and freedom that are capable of determining particular national goods in relation to a global whole?

In his Keynote Lecture, Bain pursues this inquiry by exploring an alternative conception of international order, one that takes early Christian thought as its point of departure. Seeking to enhance and build on Bain’s work, the Response Panel provides contributions from researchers working at the intersection of political theology, Christianity in Late Antiquity, angelology, and studies of empire.

**“The relation between freedom and conflict further entrenches the theory of international society within the ambit of nominalist theology”**

William Bain