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Introduction

The second part of this volume focuses on the question how, under what circumstances and with what consequences, religions were historicised – and explores moments and processes of writing religious histories in different cultures. The articles assembled in this part hence interpret history mostly as a process of writing and as the result of this process. However, the practice of writing is anything but neutral or timeless. It is an utterly social process in the sense that writing is influenced by the social, religious and political environment. Accordingly, the result – history – is a social construction. This is true despite all assertions by authors of impartiality, which pop up even in moments of interreligious disputes. The seven contributions to this part deal with case examples that range from the early modern period to the twentieth century and highlight different parts of the world: Europe, China, India, and Persia.

The first contribution in this section, ‘A Perso-Islamic universal chronicle in its historical context: Ghiyās al-Dīn Khwāndamīr’s *Ḥabīb al-siyar*’, authored by SHAHZAD BASHIR shall remind us that all forms of universal history – as much as any other form of historiography – are products of a particular time and place. What could be considered a viable historical narrative on a universal scale varies from one context to another and is conditioned by the overall epistemological, ideological, and socio-political environment in which it is born. By choosing *Ḥabīb al-siyar fī akhbār-i afrād-i bashar* (*The beloved of biographies reporting on multitudes of people*), authored by a historian and scholar named Ghiyās al-Dīn Muḥammad Khwāndamīr (1475–1535), Bashir takes an Islamic universal chronicle as his example, which was composed in Persian in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. This universal chronicle is characterised by its complexity of time concepts – which appear in a parallel and interwoven manner.

The chapter ‘Conditions for historicising religion: hindu saints, regional identity, and social change in Western India, ca. 1600–1900’ written by JON KEUNE offers a broad, diachronic survey of the different contexts in which a regional Hindu tradition’s past became an object of attention. At the centre of this examination is the question, what were the conditions under which remembering the past became valuable? His object of study is a Hindu devotional (bhakti) group in Western India, the Varkari tradition, which traces its roots to the thirteenth century and has millions of followers today. Keune highlights different kinds of conditions, *emic* as well as *etic*, under which the past of a religion becomes valuable to remember. He takes examples from poetry, hagiography, regional identity and social or religious reform.

The practitioners of religious historiography in early modern Europe, a period characterised by religious plurality and concurrence, are the centre of attention in SUSANNE RAU's contribution: 'Practitioners of religious historiography in early modern Europe'. She stresses that religious historiography is not written by the religious groups, collectively, but by individuals (belonging to their own or to an adverse party). These writers were hardly full-time academics during the early modern period, but often priests or preachers, sometimes secretaries of a city council or high school teachers. For the purpose of an analysis of power we should not only unveil motives and purposes, but also analyze the impact and influence of the historical discourse formed by chronicles. In these chronicles, religion can be involved in many purposes. One of the results of an interconfessional comparison of historiography is that each confessional group produced their histories, but they did it in many different ways, depending not only on the confession, but also on the social group the writers were writing for: the whole Church, a congregation, a town, a confessional movement. While Catholics collected information on the lives of saints, Protestants were among the first who wrote historical-critical methodologies. Or, while Catholics had a bias towards universal chronicles, Protestants and Calvinists wrote town chronicles and martyrologies – not without exception to the rules ...

In his article 'Impartiality, individualisation, and the historiography of religion: Tobias Pfanner on the rituals of the ancient Church' MARTIN MULSOW sheds light on the emergence and usage of impartiality as an argument and *habitus* in seventeenth century Europe. This aspect concerns religious historiography insofar as in the context of confessional divide a so-called impartial Church history was emerging, for which the most prominent example is Gottfried Arnold's *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie* of 1699. Mulsow analyses the specific environments in which the argument of impartiality was used and concludes that this was the case in remote areas, protected by local patrons or dukes, rather than in urban centers. His case of study is Tobias Pfanner, son of protestant emigrants, historian, lawyer and 'Hofrat' at the court of Saxe-Gotha (a small duchy in the Holy Roman Empire) around 1700. Beyond his duties as a court jurist, Pfanner was interested in Church history and was writing himself – not for the duke and rather offside the line of orthodox theologians at the court. But his personal view of theology, based on reason and tradition, and of Church history was tolerated. Through an analysis of Arnold's *Ketzerhistorie* he developed a concept of impartiality and applied it to his juridical expertise as well as to historical analysis and writing. Here, he understood himself as even more radical than Arnold.

The nineteenth century is yet another confessional age in Europe with a deepening of confessional borders, where Church history played an important

role for State formation and in theology. Two contributions address themselves to this field of study. HANNAH SCHNEIDER analyses in her contribution, entitled ‘The gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it’ – the narrative of the victorious Church in French Church histories of the nineteenth century’, the introductions of a series of Church histories written for priests and candidates to priesthood published between 1840 and 1905. They have in common an aim to present the unity of the Church throughout history, as if the French Revolution never happened. The narrative seems timeless insofar as the French Church is presented as victorious against her ‘persecutors’ of the first three centuries: against the ‘heretics’ and against the ‘laxity’ of the faithful and the clerics. Schneider asks if this argument is really timeless or rather an effort to tie up with a lost past. What we can observe here is construction of continuity. Most of the authors do not negate political changes but consider them as irrelevant for the history and unity of the Church. A real change eventuated only when Church history started to be written by laymen and professional historians around 1900.

The second contribution on the ‘second confessional age’ in Europe – entitled ‘Conflicting historiographical claims in religiously plural societies’ – addresses Catholic Church histories in nineteenth century Switzerland, which means especially Church history in a religiously plural environment. FRANZISKA METZGER’s approach is to describe the communicative production of memory or, the other way round, the production of memory as a communicative process. The objective of her study group of writers is to establish a Catholic counter-narrative, which they tried to realise in many different ways: by collecting sources, writing handbooks and even a Catholic encyclopaedia which was undertaken according to the motto of scientificity. This scientific habitus comprised source-basedness and impartiality. Moreover, the project of Catholic history in Switzerland was linked to the discourse of national history. Metzger votes therefore for an entangled history of religion, history and nation through the analysis of discursive fields, discursive practices of formation of discourses and different communicative communities. She concludes that the construction of a Catholic meta-narrative ranges between historicisation and sacralisation. Historical narratives of saints remained similar to representations of lives of saints that had no claim of scientificity; furthermore, the code ‘true/untrue’ is rather discourse than reality, which means that there is no real boundary between (presumed scientific) historiography and memory.

In his article ‘Religion and economic development: on the role of religion in the historiography of political economy in twentieth century China’ PHILIPP HETMANCZYK focuses on politico-economic historiography composed in China. In China, the term ‘feudal’ is one of the most prominent attributes seen to disqualify religious beliefs and practices from the scope of officially tolerated religious ac-

tivity throughout the twentieth century. As the term feudal indicates, this process of political dismissal is based on historiographic considerations towards religion. The paper argues that it was especially the emerging discipline of political economy, during the first half of the twentieth century, which made an important contribution to these considerations. By presenting history as a sequence of stages of economic development, the connection between religious traditions and 'feudalism' drawn by writers of political economy would allow them to identify religion as a specific problem for China's economic modernisation. Thus, the placement of religion within histories of economic development was not only part of politico-economic historiography, but it also contributed to an evaluation of religion along economic lines, which still influences the history of religions in China to this day.