

Announcement for a Conference on “Interreligious Founding”, Berlin, April 8<sup>th</sup>-  
9<sup>th</sup>, 2021



Dear colleagues,

please find attached a program for an online conference on “Interreligious Founding”, which is hosted by the Humboldt University of Berlin and will take place online via Zoom on April 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Persons interested in attending the conference are welcome to register by sending an e-mail to [mamems@uni-mainz.de](mailto:mamems@uni-mainz.de). An e-mail with a Zoom link for the workshop will be sent shortly before the start of the conference.

This workshop will constitute a continuation of the dialogue on charitable foundations held between experts of various academic disciplines in Tokyo (2019) and Singapore (2020). As a result of discussions begun at these venues, it has become apparent that the scholarship on endowments, which has unfolded to the greatest extent within Medieval Studies and therefore the landscape of the medieval Latin West, has not adequately addressed the phenomenon of interreligious patronage, that is the participation in foundation activities by persons of different religious traditions. This results from the fact that in the Western Church the sphere of foundations constituted a jealously-guarded prerogative of the majoritarian Latin Christian culture. While the Jews of Ashkenaz were allowed to a very limited extent to create and run their own foundations, the endowment of churches, monasteries and philanthropic institutions by non-Catholic Christians was not tolerated by the church and secular authorities, nor were pagans and Muslims allowed to patronize their own endowments under Christian rule. This restrictive approach was, however, by the standards of other medieval religious traditions rather exceptional. In Byzantium, though the founding of churches and monasteries by non-Orthodox was forbidden already in Late Antiquity, this prohibition was not followed in the breach. In the Islamic world not only Muslims used *waqf* extensively, but also Christians and Jews. On the Indian subcontinent rulers often patronized the religious establishments of multiple faiths. The religious syncretism of Japan and China was reflected in the foundation practices of these two lands. By focusing on the interreligious dynamic of founding, the conference participants will fundamentally change current scholarship’s understanding of foundations. The papers stemming from this conference will be published in a special issue of the journal [Endowment Studies](#).

Best wishes,

Zachary Chitwood (Mainz)

Tillmann Lohse (Berlin)

Ignacio Sánchez (Warwick)

Annette Schmiechen (Berlin)