

WORKSHOP 2026

WORKING GROUP AFRICA
within the
German Association for the
Study of Religions (DVRW)



INVITATION

Concepts of Africa and African Religions in Interconnected Worlds

13 to 14 November 2026

FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg, Erlangen

Following the volume *Africa and Its Diasporas*, the UNESCO series *General History of Africa* (1964–) has now released the volume *Global Africa Today*. The shift in perspective towards the “concept of a global Africa” is intended to describe “the ongoing journey of Africa and its global communities”. The present focus is on “relations between Africans and people of African descent as an interconnected and continuous process”.ⁱ

In this year’s workshop of the Working Group Africa (DVRW), we would like to examine questions regarding conceptualisations of Africa and interconnectedness, with a particular focus on religion. Current approaches such as *global entanglements, relatedness and relationships, or translocalities* can be discussed in greater depth. We want to examine how current debates on boundary work and identity are being shaped, both in scholarly and political arenas: Where and how are the boundaries of ‘Africa’ negotiated and for what purpose? Which interconnections determine the differences between ‘African religion’ and ‘religion in Africa/the diaspora’, and for whom? What criteria are used to define ‘Africanness’, ‘African’ life worlds, communities, and societies? How does the paleoanthropological trope that “East Africa is the homeland of us all”ⁱⁱ influence research on pre-historical African civilisations and historical identity? And how do global funding and publication infrastructures contribute to these discourses? Moving forward from earlier debates on ‘African’ versus ‘European’ perspectives in the study of religion (see Ludwig/Adogame 2004; Adogame et al. 2012), how are African-American scholarly discourses, in all Americas, brought into play when defining the boundary of ‘Africa’? Which regions and perspectives are omitted from current studies on ‘African(a) religion’ and require more attention (e.g., Indian Ocean diasporas, generational models of migration in the 20th and 21st centuries, etc.)? The workshop aims to foster critical discussions on these and further questions within interconnected worlds.

We invite colleagues from the working group and beyond to submit proposals for presentations at our upcoming workshop focused on exploring the dynamic discourse fields and intersections related to Africa, African religions, and the complexities of interconnected worlds. We also welcome presentations on any current research projects, especially from young scholars. The workshop in Erlangen will include a business meeting open to all interested in the Study of Religions in Africa. The agenda for this meeting will include the planning of future activities for the working group.

We warmly welcome interdisciplinary perspectives and encourage submissions from scholars who are not yet part of the working group!

Diana Lunkwitz, FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg

Anne Beutter, University of Bremen

Katharina Wilkens, University of Tübingen

Preliminary schedule:

Friday, 13 November 2026

14.30 – 15.00 Arrival and registration, coffee
15.00 – 15.15 Welcome and introduction
15.15 – 16.45 Keynote and discussion
16.45 – 17.15 Snacks, coffee & tea
17.15 – 18.15 AK-Business meeting
18.30 Dinner and social evening

Saturday, 14 November 2026

09.00 – 10:30 Presentation of current research projects (I)
10:30 – 11:00 Snacks, coffee & tea
11:00 – 12:00 Presentation of current research projects (II)
12:00 – 12:30 Final Discussion and Farewell
13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

General Information:

Location: FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg, Erlangen; *building and room will follow soon.*

Registration: To register, please email diana.lunkwitz@fau.de with CCs to katharina.wilkens@uni-tuebingen.de and beutter@uni-bremen.de by **31 July 2026**. If you would like to present your research work, please submit the title of your paper presentation as well.

Accommodation: Participants are requested to cater for their own accommodation.

Travel costs: Some limited travel funding will be available. Eligible for assistance are students and attendees with limited income and/or no options of reimbursement at their home institutions.

Information on accommodation in Erlangen:

A.B. Hotel, <https://www.abhotel.de/> (€)

Hotel Mirabell, <https://mirabell-hotel.de/> (€)

Hotel Stadthaus, <https://www.stadthaus-erlangen.de/> (€€)

Altstadthotel Grauer Wolf, <https://www.grauer-wolf.de/de> (€€)

Holiday Inn Express, <https://www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/de/de/erlangen/zczel/hoteldetail> (€€€)

Should you have any queries, please contact:

Diana Lunkwitz at diana.lunkwitz@fau.de or Katharina Wilkens at katharina.wilkens@uni-tuebingen.de.

¹ <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/general-history-africa-xi-global-africa-today>; <https://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/document-4874>.

¹¹ Chapurukha M. Kusimba, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/understanding-the-gaps-in-africas-archaeological-record-180987132/>; <https://www.americanscientist.org/article/we-are-all-africans>.