

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
28 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2026

GOD HUMAN MACHINE

IMAGES & IMAGINARIES OF RELIGION IN THE AGE OF AI



University of Erfurt, Germany
C 19 - Research Building
"Weltbeziehungen"

Conference Programme

Monday, 28 Sept. 2026

09:00 - 09:30 **Welcome and Registration**

09:30 - 10:00 **Opening Remarks**

Christoph Günther, Fouad Gehad Marei

10:00 - 12:00 **Panel I: Sensory and Spatial Aspects**

Chair:
**Christoph
Günther**

Tino Grisi (Politecnico di Milano): The "How" of the Rite: AI-Generated Polyhedral Synthesis and the New Imagery of Ecclesial Spaces

Nesrine Mansour (University of Colorado): What the Machine Cannot See: A Manifesto for Sacred Imagination in the Age of AI

Isobel Dickson (Dublin City University): Envisioning Artificial Intelligence: Mysticism, AI Ethics, and the Religious Imaginary of *Starmirror*

12:00 - 13:30 **Lunch Break**

13:30 - 15:30 **Panel II: Revealing the Hidden and Unimaginable**

Chair:
**Afaf
Abdelrazek**

Wajeeha Naweem (Bahria University in Karachi): The Ghost in The Pen: AI, Barakah and the Future of Islamic Calligraphy

Barbara Denuelle (University of Kent): Seeing with the Eye of the Heart: Sufi Epistemology, Visual Imagination, and AI-Generated Images

Fitri Murfianti (University of Leiden): Seeing the Unseen: AI Images, Digital Miracles, and the Remaking of Religious Imagination in Indonesia

15:30 - 15:45

Coffee Break

15:45 - 17:30

Chair:
**Fouad Gehad
Marei**

Traversing Design, Art & Devotion: A Conversation with Religious Digital Image Content Creators

Mohammad Danial Atoofi
(Delzaar Studios)

Mohamed Elshaer
(Bta3 Anime)

Sohom Ganguly
(ThePuja.App)

17:30 - 17:45

Coffee Break

17:45 - 19:15

Chair:
**Christoph
Günther**

Keynote I: Pandora's Black Box: Techno-Orientalist Images of the Prophet Muhammad in the Age of AI

Christiane Gruber
(University of Michigan)

19:30

Dinner (on-site)

Tuesday, 29 Sept. 2026

09:00 - 11:00

Chair:
**Farwa
Ejaz**

Panel III: The Politics of AI-charged Imaginaries

Efstathios Kessareas (University of Erfurt): Reimagining Hellenic Polytheism through AI: Aesthetics, Ideology, and Power

Rasool Akbari (University of Bonn): Ambivalences of AI-Rendered Iranian Cultural Imaginaries: A Case Study of the Sun and the Lion

Kathrin Trattner (University of Zürich): "Well done, my good and faithful servant." The role of generative AI in the digital martyrdom of Charlie Kirk

Wednesday, 30 Sept. 2026

11:00 - 11:15

Coffee Break

11:15 - 12:15

Bias Datasets, Artificial Hate and Racist Intelligence

Chair:
Fouad Gehad Marei

A Conversation with Ari Temkin (New York-based media artist), followed by the art installation *The Jewish Dataset*

12:15 - 13:15

Lunch Break

13:15 - 14:15

Guided VR Demonstrations

ThePuja.App, VR Hajj, VR Karbala

14:15 - 16:15

Panel IV: Interactions with AI-generated Imagery

Chair:
Gregory Price Grieve

Jan Philipp Hahn (EZW Berlin): Visualizing Divine Authority: The Persuasive Power of AI-Imagery in Interreligious Online Debates

Feeza Vasudeva & Katja Valaskivi (University of Helsinki): Godbots and Religious Mediation: An Exploratory Study of Religious AI Interaction

Sofia Tsourlaki (SOAS, London): Reclaiming Revelation: Use AI to Visualise Qur'anic Meanings Beyond the Authority of the 'Ulamā

16:15 - 16:30

Coffee Break

16:30 - 18:00

Keynote II: Cave of Dreams: Designing Ethical AI Worlds for the Study of Religion and Human Responsibility

Chair:
Fouad Gehad Marei

Gregory Price Grieve (University of North Carolina, Greensboro)

19:00

Dinner (in Erfurt city center)

09:00 - 11:00

Panel V: Re-Conceptualising AI and Religious Imagination

Chair:
Christoph Günther

Thowhidul Islam (Islamic University Chittagong) & Nurul Amin (University of Dhaka): Between Khayāl and Code: Artificial Intelligence and the Islamic Philosophy of Imagination

Arulchelvan Sriram (Anna University): From Darshan to Dataset: AI-Generated Divine Images & the Transformation of Seeing in Hindu Practice in Tamil Nadu

Kris Ramlan (Goethe University Frankfurt): Artificial Imagination? Ibn 'Arabi's Ontology of the Imaginal and AI-Generated Presence

11:00 - 11:15

Coffee Break

11:15 - 13:30

Panel VI: AI Images and Imaginaries of Religious Pasts and Futures

Chair:
Christiane Gruber

Murtala Ibrahim (Free University of Berlin): Machines of the Final Hour: AI as Eschatological Portent in West African Islam

Feeza Vasudeva (University of Helsinki) and Katharina Yadav (University of Zürich): Aesthetics and (Religious) Imagination in Hindu and Christian AI Images

Babak Rahimi (UC San Diego): Seeing AI Karbala: Artificial Visuality, Shi'i Mourning, and Futurity

Christoph Günther (University of Erfurt): "Your first day in jannah" vs. "POV: you wake up in jahannam": Images of Paradise and Hell

13:30 - 15:00

Lunch Break

15:00 - 15:30

Publication Plans

15:30 - 17:30

Chair:
Mohammed Awadh

Panel VII: Ethical Entrainment, Moral Cultivation & Postcolonial Subjectification in the Age of AI

Maria Majorie Purino (University of San Carlos): Hsing Yun's Humanistic Buddhism: Cultivating AI & Digital Humanities

Myra Abubakar (National University of Singapore): Selective Legacy 2.0: AI-Generated Imagery and the Algorithmic Curation of Postcolonial Islamic Memory

Mohamad Zreik (Sun Yat-sen University): AI and the Revival of Confucianism: Virtual Teachings and Moral Imagery in Contemporary China

17:30 - 18:00

Closing Remarks

Christoph Günther, Fouad Gehad Marei



Organisation & Contact Persons

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