



BOOK LAUNCH PRESENTATION

Imagining the Heavens Across Eurasia from Antiquity to Early Modernity

Edited by Rana Brentjes, Sonja Brentjes and
Stamatina Mastorakou

25 October 2024, 12:00-1:00 pm EST

Pre-registration required <https://bit.ly/Imagining-Heavens>

PROGRAM

Welcome, **Sabine Schmidtke**, IAS School of Historical Studies

Book introduction, **Sonja Brentjes**, Bergische Universität, IZWT, and **Rana Brentjes**, independent scholar

Chapter presentations:

John Steele, Brown University, The Department of Egyptology and Ancient Western Asian Studies, *Astral Imagery in Ancient Mesopotamia*

Fabio Spadini, Université de Lausanne, Institute of Archeology and Classical Studies, *Power, Politics, and Astrology in Rome*

Dieter Blume, emeritus, Friedrich-Schiller-University, History of Art, *Images of the constellations and the planets in Latin Euro*

Anna Caiozzo, University of Orleans, PU Histoire médiévale, *Astrological Images as the Key to the Cosmology of the Medieval Islamicate World*

Günther Oestmann, Technical University Berlin, FG Wissenschaftsgeschichte, *Astronomical Clocks in the Baltic Sea Region*

Aida Alavi, École de Louvre, Islamic Art History, *Dancing in the Sky: The Story of a Performing Goat in the Safavid Heaven*

Author's Bios:

Aida Alavi earned her PhD in Islamic Art History from Bordeaux Montaigne University (AUSONIUS) in 2023, under the supervision of Anna Caiozzo. Her research specializes in the material culture of early modern Iran, with a particular focus on Safavid magical objects and occult manuscripts. She is currently a lecturer at the École du Louvre in Paris. She is affiliated to the University of Bordeaux (AUSONIUS), and was a cooperation partner of the project *Visualization of the Heavens* from 2019 to 2022.

Dieter Blume was from 1994 to 2018 professor for History of Art at the Friedrich-Schiller-University in Jena/Germany. He held guest-professorships at John Hopkins University in Baltimore/USA, Bibliotheca Hertziana/Max-Planck-Institute in Rome/Italy and Kunsthistorisches Institut/Max-Planck-Institute in Florence/Italy. He published extensively on the art of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, among others on astrological images and the images of constellations.

Rana Brentjes is an art historian, curator, and historian of contemporary German History. Until September 2024, she was the Digital Content Curator of the research project “Visualization and Material Cultures of the Heavens” at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin. She co-edited the *Routledge Handbook on the Sciences in Islamicate Societies* (Routledge, 2023) and co-authored “The scientific environment in Samarkand around Ulugh Beg and the Zīj-i Gūrgānī” in *Commentaires du fac-simile du Livre des étoiles fixes d’Abd al-Rahmān al-Ṣūfī Manuscrit BnF Arabe 5036* edited by Anna Caiozzo.

Sonja Brentjes is a historian of science specializing in Islamicate societies and the Mediterranean from the eighth to the seventeenth century. Currently, she is a guest scholar at the Interdisziplinäre Zentrum für Wissenschafts- und Technikforschung (IZWT) of the Bergische Universität Wuppertal and president of the International Academy for the History of Science. She has extensively published on history of mathematics, mapmaking, patronage, schools, and historiographical questions.

Anna Caiozzo is Professor of Medieval Studies at the University of Orléans (France). She is working on illustrated manuscripts from the Islamized Medieval worlds. Her research focused on images as testimonies of imagination and cultural practises along the Silk Road and mainly on the relationship between images and knowledge from the 12th c to the 15th c. She has worked on astronomical, astrological and magical images; and her thesis habitation deals about the political uses of the corpus of the *Shāh nāmeh* at the Timurid period.

Günther Oestmann is extraordinary professor for history of science at Technical University Berlin. Trained as a clockmaker, he received a PhD (1992) with a study on the astronomical and astrological significance of the clock in Strasbourg Cathedral. In 2013 the Musée international d’horlogerie (La Chaux-de-Fonds) awarded the “Prix Gaïa” to him, and in 2014 he was elected as corresponding member of the International Academy of the History of Science (Paris). Fields of research: History of scientific instruments and clocks, history of astronomy/astrology and mathematical geography, maritime history.

Fabio Spadini is a SNSF (Swiss National Science Foundation) senior researcher in archeology at the Université de Lausanne (Institute of Archeology and Classical Studies). His current project has the title: *Sous le ciel de Pompéi. Le rôle du catastérisme dans l’art pompéien*. He is also an associate member of the ERC Advanced Grant *ZODIAC-Ancient Astral Science in Transformation*. His research area concerns ancient glyptic, magic and the history of science (alchemy and astrology) from Antiquity to the Middle Ages.

John Steele is Charles Edwin Wilbour Professor of Egyptology and Assyriology at Brown University, RI. He holds an honorary Professorship at Shanghai in the School of History and Culture of Science at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and is a senior fellow of the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University. He specializes in the history of astronomy, with a particular focus on Babylonian astronomy. He is editor of the book series *Scientific Writings from the Ancient and Medieval World*.