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Tradition and Tradition Theories

An International Discussion

LIT

Bibliographic information published by Die Deutsche Bibliothek
Die Deutsche Bibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche
Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the
Internet at <http://dnb.ddb.de>.

ISBN 3-8258-5183-4

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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Auslieferung/Verlagskontakt:

Grevener Str./Fresnostr. 2 48159 Münster

Tel. +49 (0)251-6203 20 Fax +49 (0)251-23 19 72

e-Mail: lit@lit-verlag.de <http://www.lit-verlag.de>

Distributed in the UK by: Global Book Marketing, 99B Wallis Rd, London, E9 5LN

Phone: +44 (0) 20 8533 5800 – Fax: +44 (0) 1600 775 663

<http://www.centralbooks.co.uk/acatalog/search.html>

Distributed in North America by:



Transaction Publishers
New Brunswick (U.S.A.) and London (U.K.)

Transaction Publishers
Rutgers University
35 Berrue Circle
Piscataway, NJ 08854

Phone: +1 (732) 445 - 2280

Fax: + 1 (732) 445 - 3138

for orders (U. S. only):

toll free (888) 999 - 6778

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Introduction

In conjunction with the collection of German essays published simultaneously by T. Larbig, S. Wiedenhofer (eds.)—*Kulturelle und religiöse Traditionen. Beiträge zu einer interdisziplinären Traditionstheorie und Traditionsanalyse* (Münster 2005)—the present volume marks the launch of the book series “Studien zur Traditionstheorie/Studies in tradition theory”. The series is designed to serve as an arena and a medium for international, interdisciplinary, intercultural and interreligious research in the field of tradition theory. The theoretical concept underlying and embracing the series is outlined by its editor in his essay included in the present volume.

This book is designed to stimulate international debate in tradition theory by presenting key contemporary essays on the theory of cultural and religious traditions—written by experts—to the wider scholarly community, thus as it were enabling the two to become directly acquainted with one other. Given the variety of disciplines, approaches, regions of scholarship, cultures and religions, no attempt could have been made to achieve a truly representative mix. The fact that Christian theology displays a certain quantitative pre-eminence in the present selection is due not only to the fact that tradition played a key role in that sphere from the outset, and that the theological notion of tradition also significantly influenced the western understanding of tradition, but also to the fact that a large number of invitations could not be accepted for a variety of reasons, and that a number of firm confirmations had to be withdrawn due to illness or other circumstances.

The book therefore marks the launch of a controlled debate on the joint development of a comprehensive, complex theory which, we hope, will be followed by further volumes dealing with other focal areas. Moreover, to help the series achieve its objective, it is also being supported by a literature database that can be accessed online at: www.traditionstheorie.de

Special thanks to Rebecca Evens and Elena Körner who helped us to prepare this volume for publication.