

# How the Upanishads Became Part of the Religious Bookshelf (And What This Has to Do With Islam)

Public lecture held by  
Prof. DDr. Franz Winter  
(University of Graz)

Wednesday, 20 December 2023  
6:15 pm – 7:45 pm

The Indian Upanishads are commonly regarded as the ultimate summary of an “Indian” viz. “Hindu” religious tradition and make up part of any collection of major religious texts of world history. Although this approach is highly problematic due to various reasons, the eminent esteem of this corpus is rather obvious and relevant to date. For the early European perception, the famous *Oupnek'hat* (id est, secretum tegendum) published 1801 and 1802 by the famous French orientalist A. H. Anquetil-Duperron (1731–1805) was the most important starting point. It is basically the earliest translation of Upanishads into a European language and introduces them on the basis of a very specific interpretative trajectory. A closer look on the origin of this influential publication has to take its relation and indebtedness to a preceding history of perception in the context of Mughal India into scrutiny, namely the *Sirr-i akbar* by the Mughal prince Dārāh Shukūh (1615–1659) which was the source for this interpretation. The major aim of the presentation is a transculturally orientated interpretation of this specific history of perception.

## Time and Location

Wednesday, 20 December 2023, 6:15 pm – 7:45 pm  
Freie Universität Berlin  
Room 2.2051 (Holzlaube)  
Fabeckstr. 23-25  
14195 Berlin

Part of the lecture series “The Invention of the Modern Religious Bookshelf” organised by Prof. Dr. Christian Meyer, Project “The Invention of the Modern Religious Bookshelf: Canons, Concepts and Communities”, Research Area 3 “Future Perfect”, Cluster of Excellence “Temporal Communities: Doing Literature in a Global Perspective”

Participation is possible without registration both in person or online via Webex. The links as well as further information about the project and the lecture series can be found on the project's website: [www.temporal-communities.de/research/future-perfect/projects/religious-bookshelf](http://www.temporal-communities.de/research/future-perfect/projects/religious-bookshelf)

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Image credit: A.-H. Anquetil Duperron, *Oupnek'hat* (id est secretum tegendum), vol. 1, Strassbourg, 1801