

Conversion in Late Antiquity: Christianity, Islam, and Beyond
Colloquium on 'Converting Identities'
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"The Stakes of Resistance: The Diffusion, Persecution and Transformation of
Manichaeism in Late Antiquity and pre-Modern China"

Abstract

The religion of Mani achieved extraordinary success as a missionary religion in both the Late Roman and Byzantine Empires as well as in Central Asia and China. However, except for a short period in which it enjoyed the patronage of the Khagan of the Uighur Turks in Central Asia it was the subject of systematic persecution by Christian, Islamic and Confucianist governments. The lecture will outline the history of diffusion and persecution of this world religion and also the ways by which it was able to survive through constant transformation. The lecture will draw on important and still largely unpublished material from an important medieval Manichaean site in South China.