



## PhD Program between the Freie Universität Berlin (FUB) and the China Scholarship Council (CSC)

**Open PhD Position at Freie Universität Berlin,  
offered only to Chinese CSC scholarship candidates 2024**

**Department/Institute:** Friedrich-Meinecke-Institut |

**Subject area:** Mittelalterliche Geschichte |

**Name of Supervisor:** Prof. Dr. Thomas Ertl |

**Number of open PhD positions:** 1 |

**Type of the PhD Study:** Full-time |

**Project title:** “Divergent Narratives: How Europeans and Orientals from East and Central Asia Discussed Their Medieval Encounter?” |

### **PhD Project description:**

From the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with the rise of the Mongol Empire and military victories one after another, most of the Eurasian continent was brought under the rule of the Mongols. Catholic countries such as Poland and Hungary also suffered attacks from the Mongols, Europeans were living in fear of Mongol invasion. At the same time, the vast territory of the Mongol Empire objectively shaped the Pax Mongolica for nearly two centuries. The Mongolian road and stage transport systems also provided Europeans convenience for traveling to Central and East Asia.

To gather intelligence, obtain knowledge and information about the Mongols, and out of the enthusiasm to spread Catholicism, a group of European Franciscan and Dominican friars for the first time ventured into Central and East Asia. Additionally, Italian merchants traveled between Europe and the Mongolian Khanates.

What is the perception of the Turks, Persians, Mongolians, and Chinese in Central and East Asia towards the foreigners who come to their lands, looking completely different from them and having strange languages and written scripts? How did the Muslims, Buddhists, Nestorians, and Confucian literati in the East view the Catholic faith that these Europeans hoped to spread to them? How did these friars and Italian merchants who came to the East interact with the pagans and heretics they encountered in the East? They brought back to Europe a wealth of information and knowledge about the East. Although this information was not completely accurate, it was still significant undoubtedly. After the European intelligentsia received this knowledge, how did they understand and interpret it in the context of their own intellectual and religious backgrounds, ultimately leading to the reconstruction

of their perceptions of the East? Has the historical impact of this pre-modern transcultural exchange on the history of Europe in the Middle Ages been well revealed? This is what this project hopes to study.

To study this topic, there are plenty of historical sources available.

1. Latin sources include (1) letters between the Papacy and the various Mongol Khanates, as well as local Christians; (2) letters of these Franciscan and Dominican friars; (3) manuscripts of Narratives of European missionaries and merchants to the East; (4) manuscripts of Annales and Chronicles of this period.
2. Chinese sources include (1) official history literature written by the governments; (2) juristic records; (3) notes and anthologies of literati; (4) annals of local history and stone inscriptions.
3. Persian sources include (1) Tārīkh-i Sulṭān Ūljāyṭū; (2) Ṭabaqāt-i Nāsirī; (3) Tarikh-i Jahāngushā; (4) Djami el-Tévarikh; (5) Mu‘izz al-Ansāb; (6) Ḥudūd al-‘Ālam min al-Mashriq ila al-Maghrib; (7) Simṭ al-‘Ulā lil-Ḥaẓrat al-‘Ulayā: dar Tārīkh-i Qarā Khitāyān Kirmān ka dar fāšila-yi 715-720 qamarī nivishta shuda; (8) Jāmi‘al-Tavārīkh; (9) Tārīkh-nāma-yi Harāt; (10) Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf al-Ḥaẓrat; (11) Shu‘ab-i Panjgāna; (12) Shu‘ab-i Panjgāna and so on.

### **Language requirements:**

- IELTS: 6,5 oder TOEFL: 95 ibt

### **Academic requirements:**

Applicants should be able to read Latin, Ancient Chinese and Persian proficiently; and preferably be able to read some of the following languages: Arabic, Syriac and Greek.

Applicants should have relevant research experience in European medieval history, ancient Chinese history, and Central Asian history.

Applicants should have taken courses related to Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism.

A Bachelor’s degree is sufficient for a full time doctorate.

### **Information of the professor or research group leader (website, awards etc.):**

**Prof. Dr. Thomas Ertl**

<https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/fmi/bereiche/mittelalter/team/ertl.html>

**Please Note:** In a first step, the complete application should be uploaded to the [online portal \(https://fuberlin.moveon4.de/form/60acfece5d328710e40bdbd5/eng\)](https://fuberlin.moveon4.de/form/60acfece5d328710e40bdbd5/eng) for evaluation by January 15th, 2024. Please do not contact the professor before. He/she will get in contact with you after having received the complete application via the International Office of Freie Universität Berlin in January.