

Prof. Dr. Rian Thum
(Department of History, University of Manchester)

“Islamic China: from the Persian, Arabic, and Chinese sources”

Thursday, 18 June 2026, 6:15 pm

Institut für Sinologie, Kaulbachstr. 53, Raum E04



Hedda Morrison (ca. 1930s) „Shop sign at the facade of a Muslim café in Baoding that sells halal food”
(photograph: University of Bristol, Historical Photos of China, Hv05-36)

For more than a millennium, Islam has been a Chinese religion, and native-born Chinese Muslims have played important roles in their homeland—as butchers, merchants, and farmers; diplomats, scholar-officials, and royal astronomers. Yet the Muslims of China have often been understood as inherently foreign, incompatible with Chinese culture. In this reappraisal, Rian Thum recaptures the ordinariness of Chinese Muslims and offers a fresh view of Islamic China, stretching across Central, Southeast, and South Asia—and of China itself.