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The Power of Interpretation:  
Imagined Authenticity –  
Appropriated Identity

Conflicting Discourses  
on New Forms of African Christianity

Edited by  
Klaus Hock

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## Preface

This volume contains the revised papers presented at the international conference on “The Power of Interpretation: Imagined Authenticity – Appropriated Identity. Conflicting Discourses on New Forms of African Christianity”, which took place at the University of Rostock on December 4–6, 2014. Its theme was. This conference was part of the research and graduate school programme of the Research Training Group “Power of Interpretation: Religion and Belief Systems in Conflicts of Interpretational Power” (Graduiertenkolleg “Deutungsmacht: Religion und belief systems in Deutungsmachtkonflikten”) located at the University of Rostock and funded by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG). While the Guided Research Group ventures into critically assessing the scope and the limits of *Deutungsmacht* (‘power of interpretation’), both as a theoretical concept and as cultural work, the conference focused on the question: What are the most significant discourses, constellations, and conflicts arising from the competing claims for the power of interpretation that aim at explaining, interpreting, defining – and even assessing or legitimising – “new forms of Christian life in Africa” and the most significant factors shaping them?

The publication of the conference papers was made possible by the German Research Foundation (DFG) in the frame of the funds provided for the Guided Research Group’s programme. Additional grants came from the University of Rostock via the Faculty of Theology. Special thanks are due to the former and to the present spokespersons of the Guided Research Group, Prof. Philipp Stoellger and Prof. Martina Kumlehn, and to its administrator, Florian Zacher.

The responsibility for planning and editing this volume lies with Klaus Hock. However, without the help of Thomas Slowig in adjusting the manuscripts to the style of this series, and, particularly, without the staunch assistance of Johann Schedlinski, who did a terrific job in copy-editing the entire volume, the publication would have been impossible to realise. My special thanks go to them. Needless to say, though, any mistake or error that entered this volume in the course of the editorial process is entirely mine.

I would also like to thank the staff at Harrassowitz Publishers for their diligent cooperation. Last but not least, I am particularly grateful to Klaus Koschorke and Johannes Meier for granting the privilege of accepting this volume for publication in their series.

Rostock, August 2016  
Klaus Hock