

Fresh Perspectives on Early Muslim Historiography

25 - 26 June 2015

International Workshop



Venue

Georg-August-Universität Göttingen
Göttingen Graduate School of Humanities
Friedländer Weg 2
37085 Göttingen
Conference Room 0.101 / Ground Floor

Thursday, 25 June

08.30 • Welcome Address and Introduction

Jens Scheiner

Yoones Dehghani Farsani

09.00 • Panel 1: The Question of Sources

Chair: **Sebastian Günther** (Göttingen)

Analysing Traditions on the Conquest of *Khaybar*

Fred M. Donner (Chicago)

Reconstructing the Historiography of the ‘Abbāsid Revolution: Al-Madā’inī and his *Kitāb al-Dawla*

Ilkka Lindstedt (Helsinki)

10.30 – 11.00 • Coffee Break

Addressing the “Gap of Sources”: Historiography and Cultural Memory in Early Islam

Antoine Borrut (College Park/Maryland)

Taking an Ocean for our Quarry? Some Methodological Reflections about Working with Early Arabic Historiography

Georg Leube (Marburg)

12.30 – 14.30 • Lunch Break

14.30 • Panel 2: The Question of Authorship

Chair: Nicolet Boekhoff-van der Voort (Nijmegen)

Story-telling in Ibn A‘tham’s *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*: Material Arrangement and the Question of Authorial Design

Mónika Schönléber (Budapest)

The *Futūḥ al-Shām* Ascribed to al-Wāqidī: Some Preliminary Thoughts on its Genesis and Development

Yoones Dehghani Farsani (Göttingen)

16.00 – 16.30 • Coffee Break

Examining Early *Strā* Material in Muqātil b. Sulaymān’s *Tafsīr*

Mehmetcan Akpınar (Tübingen)

Al-Azdī’s *Futūḥ al-Shām* Revisited

Jens Scheiner (Göttingen)

Friday, 26 June

08.15 • Panel 3: The Question of Fictionalisation

Chair: **Lale Behzadi** (Bamberg)

Fact and Fiction in Early Muslim Historiography: The Contribution of the German “Fiktionalitätsfrage” in Literary Studies to an Endless Debate

Isabel Toral-Niehoff (Göttingen)

Fitna Writing in Islamic Historiography: Witnessing or Testifying

Masoud Sadeghi (Tehran)

09.45 – 10.15 • Coffee Break

10.15 • Panel 4: The Syriac and Greek Contexts

Chair: **Zachary Chitwood** (Berlin)

Shaping Sectarian Pasts: Paradigms of Christian Historiography in Late Antiquity

Muriel Debié (Paris)

Islam Interpreted: The Picture of Muslims through the Byzantine Prism

Manolis Ulbricht (Berlin)

11.45 – 12.15 • Coffee Break

Inventions of Urbanism in Ancient Syria and the City Landscape until Late Antiquity

Ammar Abdulrahman (Damascus/Konstanz)

13.00 – 13.45 • Evaluation and Research Perspectives

Organisation

Prof. Dr. Jens Scheiner

Yoones Dehghani Farsani, M.A.

Contact

Dr. Monika Winet

CRC Bildung und Religion EDRIS

Nikolausberger Weg 23

D-37073 Göttingen

edris@uni-goettingen.de

www.uni-goettingen.de/crc-edris

Organised with the Financial Support by

CRC EDRIS (Centre and Junior Research Group III)

Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft und

Kultur

GSGG (Göttingen Graduate School of Humanities)



Early Muslim historiography represents not only a central part of Islamic Studies, but is also utilised by Muslims in Germany and in the Middle East in determining and forming identity.

Since the earliest period of Islam in the 7th century, Muhammad and the early believers endeavored to provide their community with an image of their past. After several decades had elapsed, these historical constructions were contextualized with concepts of other religious and tribal groups, coupled with alternative images of the past. As a result of this development, various reconstructions of the early Islamic past have been suggested, which have given rise to controversial debates that have continued up until the present day. For example, some scholars have argued, on the basis of extant historiographical sources, that Muhammad did not exist; whereas others stick to the prevalent account of Muhammad having been a prophet and the founder of the Islamic religion. Both views are based on the substantial, yet sometimes ambiguous, source material, which demands continuously and in-depth study.

Hence, this international and interdisciplinary workshop is devoted to four central questions pertaining to early Muslim historiography: First, the question of the compilatory character of the textual sources; second, the narrative strategies and techniques of composition used in historiographical works; third, the question of fictionalization in historical narratives; and fourth, the intercultural and interreligious context of early Muslim historiography.

The central goal of this workshop is to provide a forum that will foster an exchange of ideas and fruitful discussions on new approaches to Muslim historiography. It also seeks to present the latest research findings in the field and to develop new research perspectives for the future.