



Invitation

Thursday, 28 September 2017, 5 pm

The Prophet as a Man

Lecture by **Peter Wien** (University of Maryland) in the framework of the Conference 'New Man' in Africa, Asia and the Middle East: Practices, Networks and mobilization 1910-1960

Venue

Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33
14129 Berlin

The paper will trace the usage of the Prophet Muhammad as a model figure for the 'New Man' at the intersection of religious and nationalist discourses in the context of political mobilization in the Arab world of the 20th century. At the turn of the century, the emergence of urban mass societies in the wake of the integration of the Middle East and North Africa into an imperialist world economic system created a breeding ground for radical political organization among young men, who experienced alienation as a consequence of enhanced mobility from the countryside to the city, or sought re-orientation as graduates from modern institutions of learning. Ideologies, political and recreational organizations, as well as educational institutions offered to fill this void by appealing to forms of fellowship motivated by political agendas ranging from the left to the right, and from religious to secular orientations. The paper seeks to understand how religious imagery about the Prophet as a historical person and a man was absorbed in the different discourses across this spectrum. Indeed, this imagery built on a process of historicization and, implicitly, secularization of the Prophet as a temporal figure, including the circle of his followers (sahaba, ansar) and the events of his lifetime. This secularization happened in a variety of communities and was crafted by historians, historical novelists, journalists, political activists and not least Islamic reformers.

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Peter Wien is Associate Professor for Modern Middle Eastern History at the University of Maryland in College Park. He received his PhD in 2003 from the University of Bonn, Germany, and a Master degree in 2000 from the University of Oxford, Great Britain. He taught at Al-Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco, and was a fellow of the Centre for Modern Oriental Studies (ZMO) in Berlin. In 2017, Routledge published his book *Arab Nationalism: The Politics of History and Culture in the Modern Middle East*. Peter Wien is President of The Academic Research Institute in Iraq (TARII) and serves as the Associate Chair of the University of Maryland's Department of History.