

In October 2014, ZMO learnt that the decision about the process bringing about a resolution of ZMO's future status had been delayed. We all knew that this decision had to be based on an evaluation, and had been poised to jump into action at any moment. The news was deflating, as it came with a new decision date, and also indications that this date might well be tentative. As researchers do, we quickly returned to our respective research projects and committed ourselves to publications and academic presentations. In spite of the continued uncertainty, we spent a happy few months because research activities are closer to our hearts. As Berliners are used to delays in deadlines – still waiting for a new airport that was first supposed to open in 2010, we were surprised to hear last March that the matter was on the move. At the beginning of Easter vacation we learnt that ZMO would be visited by Leibniz Gemeinschaft in summer and by Wissenschaftsrat (German Science Council) in the autumn with a view to consider and evaluate its suitability for membership in the Wissenschaftsgemeinschaft Gotfried Wilhelm Leibniz. This might, we hope, finally provide institutional funding and hence end ZMO's current status as a »programme«.

»Evaluation« – this term prompts very different expectations and reactions. Generally speaking, academic evaluations aim at generating knowledge about the quality of research and results. If performed at an institutional, rather than at an individual level, they are meant also to assess the conditions under which work is completed. The main aim is – ostensibly – the constant improvement of the conditions under which academics work, and hence improved results. On a secondary level, such evaluations are used as a policy instru-

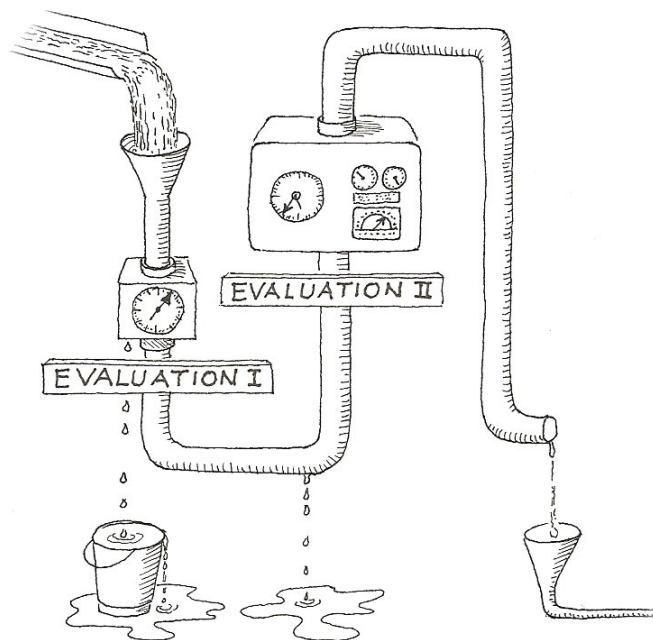
ment to take strategic decisions on the basis of the academic advice the evaluators provide: Which kind of research and research institutions should be supported? Which not? And in what ways?

This is not the place to enter into a debate about the pros and cons of a process which has been discussed by specialists, causing one of them to ask, unnerved, »What the hell is

term engagement with their subjects, the challenge of filling in long questionnaires, namely by two different institutions, in parallel, within a period of two months, demands a clear change of rhythm for all those immediately concerned. Hence, we cancelled as many commitments as we possibly could and started to consolidate the data which we had planned to have already gathered and sorted in preparation for the evaluation. But, alas, criteria are different in each case; similar questions aim at different types of information; and the apparent logic of seemingly complementary data and written answers dissolves once one starts to reflect more closely. Thus, even diligent preparations cannot replace the need to re-evaluate – basically – everything.

In short: instead of providing much-needed quiet space for reflection on achievements and potential improvements, the process quickly descended into a rather frantic attempt to collect, write, and consolidate answers. Of course, we hope that these still reflect the ways we think basic transregional research on Muslim worlds ought to be conducted, as well as our contribution to the field. However, the process also reveals the arbitrariness of data collection. How do I explain that the institutes with whom we currently have collaborative projects might still not be the most relevant for our overall work – notwithstanding very important and fruitful collaborations? How do I select the most important 3-5 (!) publications out of a total of more than 300 over a period of three years? And indeed – what is quality? What is the uniqueness we need to demonstrate in order to secure our future funding?

Of course, reflecting on these issues is, in and of itself, a very useful exercise. For this, having a little more time would have been useful – whether we would advocate for longer periods to spend on these exercises, how-



Evaluation III (©Erwin Pischel, toonpool.com)

quality?» and another to answer this question by saying »quality is a moving target«.¹ Let me instead briefly describe what the news of an imminent evaluation mean for a research centre in practical terms. While researchers performing basic research are used to long-

1 Dagmar Simon, »Selbststeuerung der Wissenschaft durch Evaluationen?«, in Klaus Fischer, Heinrich Parthey, *Evaluation wissenschaftlicher Institutionen: Wissenschaftsforschung Jahrbuch 2003*, 2nd ed. Berlin 2011, p. 15f.

Modern India in German Archives, 1706-1989 (Das moderne Indien in deutschen Archiven 1706-1989)

Anandita Bajpai



The richness and potential of the holdings in German archives on modern Indian history have so far been insufficiently appreciated. For the international community of historians of India, these resources can offer new research perspectives that have remained obstructed by an excessive fixation on British colonial archives. At the same time, innovative research questions can be generated for transnational historical comparisons and for the historical analysis of »globalisation« processes through an exploration of the modern history of German-Indian entanglements. Moreover, the twofold widening of research perspectives resulting from these investigations creates new opportunities for more intensive communication and cooperation between Indian and German traditions of historical inquiry.

The DFG funded long-term project, *Modern India in German Archives* (2014-2026), aims to produce the necessary conditions for this endeavour.

MIDA will systematically collect catalogue and keyword information on holdings in German archives on modern India and the history of German-Indian entanglements within a single database, from the establishment of the Danish-Halle Mission in South India (1706) up to the end of Germany's political division (1989-90). It will make this database available to the international academic community on a long-term basis as a »growing« and open digital resource.

The project aims to demonstrate the potential of German archival resources for India-related studies through exemplary German-Indian pilot research projects and a corresponding publication series.

The project officially commenced in November 2014 with research being simultaneously conducted at three partner institutions: Centre for Modern Indian Studies (CeMIS) in Göttingen, Institut für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften (IAAW) and Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) in Berlin. The ZMO team consists of Dr. Heike Liebau (Project Leader) and Dr. Anandita Bajpai.

The first panel comprised presentations by Lydia Hauth and Jahnavi Phalkey, the former discussing the relatively recently discovered photographic collection and diaries of Egon von Eickstedt, a twentieth-century physical anthropologist working in India, and the latter offering insights into the interlinked trajectories of South Asian and German scientists, specifically through a history of aeronautics,



Inaugural MIDA workshop 30-31 January 2015, Humboldt University Berlin

MIDA's inaugural workshop was held at the Seminar für Südasiens-Studien, IAAW, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin on 30-31 January 2015. The workshop was attended by 21 participants, with varied institutional affiliations, and consisted of 16 presentations.

Michael Mann (IAAW), one of MIDA's three project leaders, officially opened the workshop. This was followed by a presentation by Ravi Ahuja (CeMIS), another project leader, on the key objectives of the research project and its structure.

military history, and engineering education. The second panel consisted of presentations by Armin Grünbacher and Adam Jones, the former discussing the question of India's considerations with regards to recognizing the GDR and their consequences for Bonn's foreign policy, based on files found in the Federal Chancellery, and the latter concerning the methodological issues involved in systemizing archival information about missions in several African countries.

In the third panel, Chen Tzoref-Ashkenazi discussed the presence of German troops in

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ever, remains doubtful. Furthermore, such an evaluation also reveals an institution's team spirit, where even colleagues on long-planned fieldwork trips willingly (if perhaps not happily) write contributions to answers or critically read texts. Indeed, this is a wonderful experience. And the support from those in the research institutions responsible for the evaluation, as well as their understanding of our questions, despite occasional confusion, cannot be underestimated. Without a doubt,

one never has as full a picture of the entire institute in its many facets as in such moments – however, one also never realises the fragility and subjectivity of »data« more than during such a process.

As we near the end of our document preparation process, we hope most of all that the process of turning ZMO into a more permanent institution will reach a successful end. Even if certain details might be subject to discussion, there is hardly any doubt that ZMO has not

only contributed to creating a research agenda on Muslim societies in Asia, Africa and beyond, but that it also constitutes a vibrant international community of scholars dedicated to continuing this important work, and to communicating it through publications, in teaching, interviews and other activities. One of these is, inevitably, the completion of evaluation materials.

Ulrike Freitag

eighteenth-century India, sent there to assist the British East India Company in the Second Anglo Mysore War (1780-1784) and remaining in India until 1791. Vandana Joshi's paper, based on holdings in the International Tracing Service Archive, shed light on the presence of South Asians in Germany during WWII, with a specific focus on the processes of counting, registering and, at times, exhumation of graves of South Asian civilians and prisoners of war in Nazi Germany.

Joachim Oesterheld's expert report during the fourth panel provided suggestions for exploring new research areas, like the relatively underinvestigated period of India's relations with East Germany and West Germany during the 1945-54 period. Gregor Metzsig's paper focussed on the history of the everyday life of German-speaking Jesuits in India, illustrating the decentralised nature of the documents related to the subject, which are also distributed in numerous German archives. Mrinalini Sebastian's paper traced the global flow of indigenous botanical knowledge from southern India to Europe and back.

In panel five, Diethelm Weidemann's expert report pointed to the need to ensure a dialogue among researchers working on the holdings in the German archives and National Archives of India.

Brigitte Klosterberg's interactive presentation gave an overview of the digitised mission holdings in the archive of the Francke Foundation in Halle and how one may access their titles and descriptions. Keyvan Djahangiri's presentation, based on the same holdings, raised the question of whether we are witnessing the creation of German »Centres of Calculation« whereby »information is accumulated, circulated and managed on »India«? Or rather standardisation procedures that lead to a static and instructive dead end of knowledge?

In panel six, Ajay Bharadwaj, Anne Murphy and Raghavendra R.V. Karkala's paper on German cinematic representations of/in/about India discussed how these can contribute to comprehending Europe's engagement with India beyond the lens of British knowledge. Debjani Bhattacharya's paper brought to the forefront the relatively unexplored zone of the transfer of bureaucratic knowledge between India and Germany (via Britain).

The seventh panel comprised an expert report by Frank Drauschke with illustrative examples from the experiences of »Facts and Files«, as a research organisation dealing with creating databases and conducting archival research.

The workshop ended with a round table discussion moderated by Heike Liebau, the third MIDA project leader. Among others, issues concerning the project's technical aspects, conducting instructive workshops, links between individual doctoral and post-doctoral projects, and the level of description that the resulting database would offer, were discussed.

The workshop was an enriching and necessary step, not only for announcing MIDA's formal commencement and mobilizing pre-existing expertise on the research subject, but also for developing a platform to engage in discussions and acquire suggestions on how to proceed in the upcoming years.

Dr. Anandita Bajpai received her Bachelor degree in Political Science (Delhi University, India). She obtained a Master degree in Global Studies at University Leipzig (Germany) and University Vienna (Austria). Her PhD in Global Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Philosophy, Universität Leipzig was titled: »Speaking« the Nation: (E)merging faces of economic reforms and secularism in the rhetoric of India's Prime Ministers, 1991-2011. As a MIDA research fellow she is institutionally based at ZMO and partially at the Department of South Asian Studies, HU Berlin. Her research interests include: political rhetoric in India, India's neoliberal economic transition, secularism, nation branding campaigns, and modern Indian history through the lens of German archives.

Volkswagen/Mellon Foundation Grants

Each academic year, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Volkswagen Foundation fund up to twelve Postdoctoral Fellowships in the Humanities for stays in Germany. With its funding initiative entitled »Postdoctoral Fellowships in the Humanities at Universities and Research Institutes in Germany and the USA«, which began in 2011, the Volkswagen Foundation has expanded the Harvard Fellowships, which started in 2007, to include other institutions of outstanding repute in the USA. In 2012, the Harvard Fellowship programme was expanded reciprocally to furnish American postdocs with the opportunity to spend a year working on a research project in Germany. The Volkswagen Foundation works in close cooperation on this initiative with the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York. ZMO has been among the participating institutions since 2013. In 2014-15, ZMO hosts two fellows, Dr. Ahmed El Shamsy (University of Chicago, Chicago, IL) and Dr. Steven Serels (Harvard University, Cambridge, MA). In the following Ahmed El Shamsy introduces his work at ZMO.

The research project that I am pursuing as a Volkswagen and Mellon Foundation fellow at ZMO this year investigates the effects that the adoption of print had on the Islamic intellectual tradition in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The curious fact whose discovery initiated this research project is that at the threshold of the printing press era, in the late nineteenth century, Islamic scholarship actually had very little to do with the bulk of the writings that make up this extensive tradition. The intellectual horizon of late nineteenth-century Muslim scholars was dominated by a much narrower corpus of relatively recent texts, written between the sixteenth and nineteenth centu-

ries. By contrast, since the early twentieth century and until today, what both scholars of Islam and Muslims consider the classics of Islamic thought are overwhelmingly the earlier works, mostly written in the ninth to fourteenth centuries. So the shift from a manuscript culture to one focussed on printed book did not just transfer old wine into new skins. Rather, what took place was a fundamental renegotiation and reinvention of the classical Islamic written tradition.

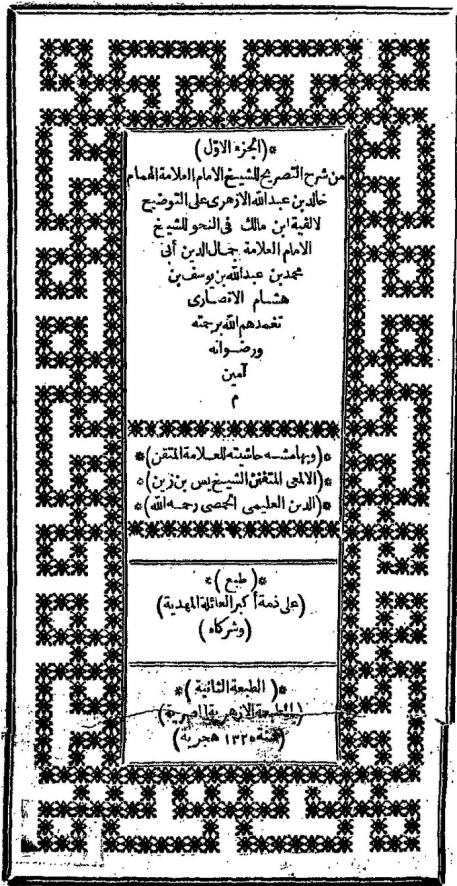
What caused this shift in the very foundations of Islamic scholarship? I believe that the answer is editing; specifically, the selective editing, publication and dissemination of works that, though drawn from the tradition,



Dr. Ahmed El Shamsy

increasingly reflected not what scholars were actually reading at the time, but rather what the editors felt that they should be reading. These editors, who were of course generally scholars themselves, chose certain works – often quite obscure ones – that served their intellectual and political goals; they hunted down manuscripts, edited them and often also arranged and financed the publication of the editions. In this way, they lifted certain texts out of the obscurity of manuscript repositories and re-injected them into the cultural bloodstream of Islam through the mass circulation of print, which made works easily accessible and reproducible. Through

this process of selective editing, the editors quite literally created the published canon of Islamic literature that we know today. Furthermore, in addition to transforming the content of the literary corpus, the movement of editing also revolutionised its form. The first works of Islamic scholarship to be printed were mostly drawn from the post-classical texts that dominated the literature in the nineteenth century. These were typically embedded in and printed with layers of commentary, the text followed the underlying manuscript closely (even reproducing errors), and no editor was mentioned. But as the scholarly publishing field began to gather steam, the output of postclassical prints was quickly dwarfed by a flood of published classical works, and these now carried the names of their editors prominently on their covers. Another innovation was the inclusion of critical apparatus, making evident the editor's role as a critical and expert »co-producer« of the final, published work.



A commentary on a 13th century text on grammar, published in Cairo, 1907

Who were these editors? Why did they choose certain works and not others, and what did they achieve, or hope to achieve, with their publication? We don't really know: many of these editors are completely unknown, especially in Western academia, and even those who are known are typically

famous for activities other than editing, such as political activism or literary production and criticism. So at the most basic level, what my project – the book that I intend to produce from this research – offers is the first-ever detailed account of these editors: their backgrounds, their agendas, their goals and their interconnections.

The source base is incredibly rich and evocative. Just to give a few examples, we have the story of Ahmad al-Husayni (1859–1918), a Sharia lawyer who spent his life and wealth on tracking down, analysing and synthesising the almost forgotten ideas of a foundational ninth-century jurist, while fending off the bitter attacks of the scholarly establishment; we have the meticulous editorial practices developed by Ahmad Shakir (1892–1958), whose goal was to counterbalance what he saw as an intellectual dependence on the work of Western Orientalists; and we have the articles of the famous reformer Rashid Rida (1865–1935), explaining his deliberate editing of marginal medieval works in order to resurrect certain scholarly concepts and harness them to attack the status quo of Islamic scholarship. These and many other individual stories come together to tell the history of what we today consider the classics of Islamic thought, as well as the history of the Islamic »republic of letters« of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, that is, the transnational community of scholars who both collaborated and competed with one another.

My book project speaks directly to a number of broader themes in the intellectual history of the modern Middle East, in particular the evolution of Islamic book culture and its role in the cultural revival movement known as the Nahda. In order to explore these connections from different perspectives, I organised an international conference under the heading Print Culture and Islamic Thought, 1850–1950 at ZMO on 8–9 May 2015. It brought together a diverse range of both junior and senior scholars from Europe, the Middle East, and North America to consider the various ways in which the collection, editing, and publication of classical works of Islamic thought and Arabic literature in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries affected Islamic intellectual culture.

Ahmed El Shamsy is an assistant professor of Islamic thought at the University of Chicago. He studies the intellectual history of Islam, focusing on Islamic law and theology, cultures of orality and literacy, and classical Islamic education. His first book, The Canonization of Islamic Law: A Social and Intellectual History, traces the transformation of Islamic law from a primarily oral tradition to a systematic written discipline. He is currently working on his second book.

activities

■ Conferences & Workshops

Urban Fragmentation(s)
Border & Identity III,
Centers for Advanced Studies
in the Humanities (GWZ),
16-19 March 2015, GWZ Berlin



More than half of the world's population lives in towns and cities – a proportion still increasing every year. How does the city shape everyday life and the self-understanding of its inhabitants? How do identities emerge in the interplay of different cultures, languages and social groups?

A joint conference of all three GWZ (Centres for Advanced Studies in the Humanities), held from the 16–19 March 2015 at Humboldt University, addressed the above-mentioned questions on urbanity. The conference, entitled »Urban Fragmentation(s)« was the third in a series of meetings on the overall topic of »Borders & Identity«. The conference also contributed to The Science Year 2015's topic »City of the Future«. About 100 participants, coming from institutions in 18 different countries, presented their research results as speakers, during poster sessions, or in the course of panel discussions.

Three parallel sections, one organised by each centre, addressed issues of »Language and Linguistics« (ZAS, Centre for General Linguistics), »Literature and Translation« (ZfL, Centre for Literary and Cultural Studies), and »Society and Governance« (ZMO, Centre for Modern Oriental Studies). Employing the expertise of the three GWZ, the conference focussed on changing notions and constellations of cultural, linguistic, and social identities. Identity is not understood here as an entity, but as a set of inclusions and exclusions underlying a constant process of renegotiation.

The »Society and Governance« section developed comparative perspectives on regions such as China, Central Asia, and Northern Africa. Participants discussed phenomena of fragmentation in different city regimes, and they found comparable (colonial) settings leading to different developments in exclusion processes. The speakers outlined



Prof. Ulrike Freitag, Dr. Sonja Hegasy, Dr. Hagen Findeis (photo: Matthias Stief)

Discussion »New Perspectives on Interdisciplinarity« with Dr. Sanaa Alimia (photo: Matthias Stief)



the interconnectedness of spatial and social marginalisation and the construction of narratives to legitimise rights to the city or to different spaces within it. It became clear that the definition, function, and relation of public and private play a central role here, as well as the permeability of borders and the need for safety.

Since 2014, the ZMO research group »Cities as Laboratories of Change« has been working on fragmentations within cities. In several regionally diverse case studies, researchers from different disciplines have examined the conditions and consequences of urban marginalisation and its consequences for the whole cities' economic and social fabric. In the

course of the conference, ZMO researchers presented their research results: Wai Weng Hew's presentation on »The Production of Islamic Places in the Suburbs of Jakarta« and Nora Lafi's presentation of »Processes of Urban Fragmentation on the Margins of Late-Ottoman and Early Colonial Tunis« are just two examples here. Several ZMO members also participated by chairing conference panels in the »Society and Governance« and the »Literature and Translations« sections, as in the case of Norman Saadi Nikro, who chaired a panel on »The Aftereffects of War in Lebanon«. »Urban Fragmentations« aimed at understanding urban societies as places of social, cultural, and religious

(ex)change. (An exchange does not necessarily take place in a well-ordered and peaceful manner, but also sometimes violently and as a destructive force.) The design of three parallel conference sections, as well as the line-up within panels, reflected an interdisciplinary approach necessary to cover all three GWZ research areas. What began as a necessity born out of circumstance turned into an innovative approach, the benefits of which all the participants underscored.

This text is based on the conference proceedings by Hagen Findeis (ZMO), Stefane Jantedy (ZAS) and Dirk Naguschewski (ZfL), which are published in the 2014 GWZ Yearbook.

Constanze Fertig



Local Histories, (Power-)Politics and the Search for Historical Authenticity, Workshop within the Leibniz Research Alliance »Historical Authenticity«, 27-28 February 2015, ZMO



national Textbook Research (Braunschweig) and the Peace Research Institute (Frankfurt) that took place within the framework of the Leibniz Research Alliance »Historical Authenticity«. ZMO has been participating in two of the four thematic lines of inquiry since 2013 – these are »Historical Authenticity as a Political-Cultural Argument« and »Spaces of Authenticity«: <http://www.leibniz-historische-authentizitaet.de/en/forschung/research-topics/>.

Within the thematic line »Historical Authenticity as a Political-Cultural Argument«, workshop contributions and lectures are divided into the sections »Authenticity and Experience«, »Authenticity and Power«, and »Authenticity and Compatibility«. In this context, the workshop sought to combine theoretical inputs with empirical studies that deal with questions of group-specific identities, entangled memories, construction of power, and strategies of authentication. The thematic frame ranged from constructed identities in Northern Ireland, to multiple memories of a multi-generation family in Turkey, to conflicts around »authentic« memories in present-day Lithuania.

The final discussion of the concept of historical authenticity was centred on three areas: Firstly, the potential for conflict within representations of history with regards to power relations and historical narratives;

secondly, the notion of the subjectivity of historical material, as well as one's own positionality as a basis for historiography; and thirdly, the controversy around the term authenticity as a non-historical category which is universally used in historical case studies.

Ulrike Peters



When and why do a history or claims to historical authenticity become important arguments in the debate over political power? Is experience a criterion for producers and recipients of history to evaluate in circulating local histories? Do claims of compatibility with national and global histories help to validate claims of authenticity in relation to historical narratives that local elites produce?

These questions, among others, were subject matters in a workshop jointly organised by ZMO, Georg-Eckert-Institute for Inter-

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■ Lecture Series

ZMO-Colloquium 2015/2016: The Future of the City – City of the Future: Envisioning New Forms of Urbanism in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East

While in 1950 about 30% of the world's population lived in cities, by 2014 this percentage had risen to 54; and it is bound to increase in the future. According to the United Nations, Africa and Asia, which until now have remained predominantly rural, will be among the fastest urbanizing world regions in the decades to come. The Winter Colloquium Series, organised by Dr. Wai Weng Hew and Dr. Sanaa Alimia examines new trends in urbanisation and the impact of those trends on urban spaces and the meanings of urbanity, with a focus on Asian, African and Middle Eastern examples.

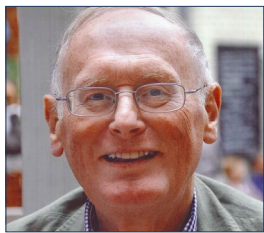
At its core, the colloquium asks: What exactly is the city of the future and how much does it mark a break with past and current understandings of the city? How are examples of »rural-to-urban interfaces«, the »green city«, »smart city«, »Islamic city«, »Dubai urbanism«, or the »slum city« shaping ideals and/or realities of the »city of the future«? And how do these examples create their own set of challenges for contemporaneous and future urban experiences? Moreover, how are cities connected to each other via various forms of human, economic, and political (transnational and/or translocal) capital

and how do new models of urbanisation, but also of global linkages and communications, influence local developments? In addition, the colloquium explores not only the future of city development and urban life, but also how the future is articulated in cities through urban planning, place-making and everyday practice. It asks, who lays claim to the city and how, as well as who are the beneficiaries and losers in new forms of urban development? The colloquium starts on **24 September 2015**. For the schedule please see <https://www.zmo.de/veranstaltungen/Veranstaltungen2015.html>.
Wai Weng Hew



■ Other Activities

Lecture: Der muslimische Gräberkult und seine Feinde: Ein aktuelles Politikum, Prof. em. Dr. Werner Ende, 13 November 2014, ZMO



Prof. Werner Ende

Professor Werner Ende, a longtime member of the ZMO Advisory Board with an active interest in ZMO's development, donated a collection of research literature (388 monographs and 296 off-prints) on Wahhābiya, Salafiya and Twelver Shia (particularly in Lebanon, Iraq, and the Arabian Peninsula), as well as on the Arab Revolt in World War I and Islamic reform movements in the 20th century to the ZMO library. On this occasion he presented

his current research on the **Medinese Cemetery of Al-Baqi'** in a lecture at ZMO. The lecture focussed on the Islamic dispute regarding the visitation of tombs. Professor Ende explained the underlying Wahhābī and Salafī religious-theological principles and the resulting criticism of heretical ideas and actions leading to putative polytheism. Hence, during the 18th century, Wahābīs removed sepulchre mosques and other places of veneration in Central Arabia. This tendency

can also be connected to the contemporary violent destruction of mausoleums in Syria and Iraq. The question of the visitation of tombs is currently politicised in the conflict between Saudi Arabia, which fervently opposes the practice, and Iran, which supports it. Even though it seems that currently the question of the visitation of Muslim tombs is primarily instrumentalised as a political and media-effective tool of provocation, Professor Ende's lecture, however, countered this current political development by presenting examples of a mutual understanding of differing positions, by demonstrating the objective existence of a longstanding theological debate between Sunni and Shi'i scholars on this subject.
Thomas Ripper

Book Presentation: *Under Construction: Logics of Urbanism in the Gulf*, 11 March 2015, Aarhus University

Three months after its publication, *Under Construction: Logics of Urbanism in the Gulf Region* (Farnham: Ashgate 2014) was presented at the Department of Arab and Islamic Studies at Aarhus University (Denmark). The presentation was jointly organised by Steffen Wippel, who is not only one of the book's editors but currently a Visiting Professor of Middle East Studies at the University of Southern Denmark in Odense, and Boris Brorman Jensen, a famous architect, who formerly worked at the Aarhus School of Architecture (Denmark). The presentation focussed on four themes: How Can We



Campus Aarhus University

Make Sense of Development in Cities in the Gulf Region? (Steffen Wippel); Neo-Falconry and the Animal Scape (Birgit Krawietz); Masdar City – A Power Point Presentation (Boris Brorman Jensen); and Dubai as a Regional and Global Archetype (Katrin Bromber). The presentation, which was scheduled in the morning during the Danish university's normal working hours, gave rise to a lively debate among fully attentive colleagues and students.
Katrin Bromber

ZMO's Cooperation in Film Festivals: Fresh Reflections on Two Regions

Continuing its fruitful relationship with the independent non-profit association *makan* – Centre for Arab Film and the German section of the widely known *AfricAvenir International Foundation*, ZMO again took the opportunity to cooperate in the organisation of two film festivals. While both festivals try to present a German audience a cinema world beyond the narrow European and US-American dominated film production by screening a variety of interesting films by Arab and African directors, the film festivals also pursue individual aims, which are shared and supported by ZMO. On 8 April 2015, the 6th *ALFILM – Arab Film Festival* in Berlin, organised by *makan*, started

with movies from all over the Arab World. In addressing a region partly in turmoil and often generally connected with negative news and images, the festival wants to draw a multifaceted picture of Arab culture and promote intercultural dialogue through film. During the festival, ZMO fellow Saadi Nikro introduced the documentary »Home Sweet Home« by Nadine Naous and provided some insights into the social and political sensibilities in current Lebanon. Also in this year *AfricAvenir* continued its film series »African Reflections«. While mostly reduced to a continent of misery or exoticism, the African film productions within the series

shed a fresh light on Africa's developments and allow for a more differentiated view into the diversity of the continent and its most pressing social challenges. On 27 May 2015, *AfricAvenir* screened the German premiere of »Fadhma N'Soumer«, in which Algerian director Belkacem Hadjadj presents the life of Lalla Fatma N'Soumer, an important figure of the anticolonial resistance in 19th century Algeria. During the following round table, ZMO fellow Nora Lafi discussed Algeria's historical situation under French colonial rule and Hadjadj's cinematic portrayal of these times of anticolonial rebellion and resistance with the director and the audience.

Yasser Mehanna



Concretising the Terms of Debate: Islam and Secularism in the German Press

A reflection on Nils Riecken's articles »Raus aus dem Containerdenken«, *Der Tagesspiegel* 28 January 2015 and »Die Umklammerung«, *Das Parlament*, 13 April 2015

ZMO historian Nils Riecken recently published two opinion pieces in the newspapers *Der Tagesspiegel* and *Das Parlament* on the debates that have ensued in the German press concerning Islam, secularism, and violence following the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris. Predictably, a faux-liberal, establishmentarian camp has attempted in standard Orientalist fashion to connect a reified conception of »Islam« to violence carried out in that religion's name. In response, those seeking to counteract such negative generalisations about a religion followed by a sixth of humanity and, like any religion, extremely diverse in its concrete manifestations, have attempted to argue back through positive generalisations, such as the claim that »Islam« is a religion of peace, and that, historically, its practitioners have been tolerant of other faiths in their midst. Riecken sees the strategy employed by both »sides« in this debate as inadequate, and intervenes in it by highlighting the fact that both equally rely on static, and trans- (if not anti-)historical understandings of heavily loaded postulates such as »the West«, »Islam«, »Christianity«, »Enlightenment«, and so on. He points out that »[s]entences such as ›Islam is peace-loving‹ and ›Islam is violent‹ appear as absolute, place-less and timeless« – fallaciously so – if one does not take into the account the power dynamics of *who* is observing particular phenomena, from *where* in the social field one is doing so, and with the additional awareness of every utterance's implication in overarching social forms and patterns of communication. All these variables are inextricably part of what frames a situation and an utterance as such. Ironically, both self-declared *Islamkritiker*

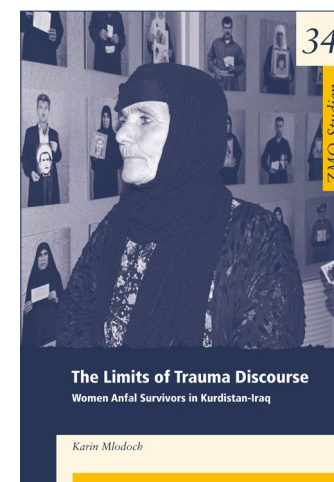
(»critics of Islam«) and religious fundamentalists find themselves in agreement with regards to the *terms of debate*: namely, that »Islam« is a static and invariable entity across time and space that has an unchanging »essence« and system of norms. The only substantive difference is the normative question of an endorsement or a denouncement of this entity. As with »Islam«, it is equally important, insists Riecken, to historicise »secularism« itself, and not see it as yet another free-floating and timeless concept. In the manner of its deployment by Western states – whether as *laïcité* in France or the weaker separation of Church and State in Germany – secularism here is a historically contingent idea, which has developed out of a particular history, and under the influence of European Christianity. To locate secularism in history is not to reject either the idea of a pluralistic society or a religiously »neutral« state; it is simply a matter of intellectual honesty and due diligence.

All in all, Riecken asks that we interrogate the *form* that public reason takes in contemporary news media discourse – and not simply its *content* – when we debate issues of »self« and »other«, religion, secularism, violence, and the minoritisation of Muslims in German society; and above all, that we do not abdicate complexity and nuance for the satisfaction of an easy and pre-packaged answer, particularly when such knee-jerk generalisations lead to the stigmatisation and potential scapegoating of an entire religion and, consequently, a large swathe of the German populace. We've been down that road before, and where it leads is not a place anybody in their right mind wishes to return to.

Smaran Dayal

publications

■ ZMO Publication Series



Karin Mlodoč, **The Limits of Trauma Discourse. Women Anfal Survivors in Kurdistan-Iraq**, ed. by Zentrum Moderner Orient, Geisteswissenschaftliche Zentren Berlin e.V., ZMO-Studien 34, 2014, 541 p.

The book addresses one of the most heinous crimes of Saddam Hussein's Baath regime in Iraq, the so-called Anfal Campaign against the Kurdish population in 1988: within a few months, thousands of villages were destroyed; up to 182,000 men and women abducted and murdered; tens of thousands of civilians detained and forcibly resettled. Based on longstanding work with women Anfal survivors in the Germyan region of Kurdistan-Iraq, the author explores their psychosocial situation and coping strategies over more than twenty years until today. She documents the women's path from victims to survivors, their struggle for truth, justice, and acknowledgement, and their conflicts with

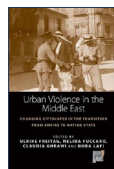
both the Kurdish national victimhood discourse and Iraqi national strategies in dealing with the past.

The research gives an exceptional long-term psychological perspective on coping with extreme violence, beyond common discourses of trauma and »healing«. It links psychological trauma research to memory studies and the debate on socio-political reconstruction in post-conflict societies.

■ Other Publications

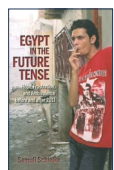
• Lange, Katharina; Bromber, Katrin; Féaux de la Croix, Jeanne (eds.): *The Temporal Politics of Big Dams in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia*, Special Issue *Water History* 6(4), December 2014.

• Espagne, Michel; Lafi, Nora; Rabault-Feuerhahn, Pascale (eds.): *Silvestre de Sacy Le projet européen d'une science orientaliste*, Paris: Editions du Cerf 2014, 356p.



• Freitag, Ulrike; Fuccaro Nelida, Ghrawi, Claudia; Lafi, Nora (eds.): *Urban Violence in the Middle East. Changing Cityscapes in the Transition from Empire to Nation State*, Berghahn, 2015, 334p.

• Ahmad, Ali Nabil, et al. (eds.): *Pakistani Cinema*, Special issue of *BioScope: South Asian Screen Studies* 5(2), 2014, online: <http://bio.sagepub.com/content/current>.



• Schielke, Samuli: *Egypt in the Future Tense. Hope, Frustration, and Ambivalence before and after 2011*, Indiana University Press: Bloomington & Indianapolis, 2015, 260p.

For further publications please see https://www.zmo.de/publikationen/index_e.html



news

People

ZMO welcomes three new colleagues as of January 2015. Regina Sarreiter, Public Relations Assistant at ZMO from 2009-2014, started as a PhD student in the ZMO research group *Trajectories of Lives and Knowledge*. In her PhD project she is working on an epistemic biography of ethnographic collections from South Africa and Tanzania from the 1920s. Annegret Roelcke, a student assistant at ZMO between 2012 and 2014, started a PhD project on »Religious Tourism in Eyüp: Constructions of an Islamic Space in Istanbul« in the ZMO research group *Cities as Laboratories of Change*. She studied Arabic Studies at Leipzig University and completed a master in Islamic Studies at FU Berlin in 2014. Her research interests lie

in urban research, politics around the sacred and the creation and use of history. Patrick Schukalla did a Bachelor in Geographical Sciences with a focus on Human Geography at the FU Berlin. He completed the master programme, »Geographies of Globalisation« at Goethe University, Frankfurt/Main. As a PhD student he is currently working in the research group *Politics of Resources* at ZMO, focussing on the outset of uranium mining in Tanzania. The project, provisionally titled »Politics of Uranium in Tanzania – The Making of a Resource«, shall highlight the discursive, technological and social practices in a set of conflicting rationalities concerning resource making and usage. ZMO also welcomed Dr. Anandita Bajpai as a post-doctoral fellow at ZMO in November 2014 (see Profiles).

As part of its visiting research fellowships programme, in 2015 ZMO invited four fellows – Ayşe Çavdar, European University Viadrina, Frankfurt/Oder (February-March), Dr. Gisa Weszkalnys, London School of Economics and Political Science, London (March-April), Dr. Silke Strickrodt, German Historical Institute, London (May-June) and Prof. Abdulkader Tayob, University of Cape Town (July-August). ZMO bade farewell to Alexander von Humboldt Fellow Dr. Reza Masoudi Nejad who stayed at ZMO for two years working on »The Spatial Phenomenology of Protest«. As of May 2015, Dr. Izabela Orłowska has started as an AvH fellow at ZMO. She studied African Studies at the University of Warsaw and completed her PhD in African history at SOAS, London. Orłowska conducted research on Ethiopian political culture with a particular focus on the symbolism of power. At ZMO she is pursuing the project »Illusions of Change? A Cultural History of Progress in Ethiopia«. Dr. Houchang E. Chehabi from Boston University, USA is a short-term AvH fellow from June to August 2015.

Since October 2014, Juliane Schumacher from the University of Potsdam has been affiliated with ZMO on a fellowship from the Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes. She is doing her PhD on climate protection projects in the Middle East and North Africa.

ZMO also hosted two scholars who won stipends from the Swiss National Science Foundation: Dr. Heinrich Hartmann from the University of Basel pursued his project on »International Expertise and Rural Development in Turkey from 1950 to 1980« from January to April 2015; Dr. Ulrich Brandenburg from the University of Zurich worked on Japan and Islam between 1890-1915 during a one-month stay in April.

Dr. Léon Buskens (Leiden University) is a guest fellow ZMO from May until the beginning of July. He works on the Dutch Arabist and Islamic scholar Christiaan Snouck Hourgronje.

Dr. Britta Frede is affiliated with ZMO as a postdoctoral partner fellow with support from the Volkswagen Foundation's programme *Knowledge for Tomorrow – Postdoctoral Fellowships in the Humanities in Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa* until July 2016. Her project is titled »Transforming Concepts of Knowledge: Muslim Female Learning Circles in Contemporary Urban Africa«.

Feras Krimsti, ZMO fellow since 2011, has been granted a scholarship from Istanbul's Orient Institute. His research stay in Istanbul (from May until October 2015) will allow him to further work on his PhD project focussing on 18th-century travelogues. As a guest fellow, Feras Krimsti will participate in the Institute's events and conduct research in libraries and archives.

Since March 2015, ZMO has been an official partner in the Science Year 2015, an initiative of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, which focuses on the »City of the Future«.

Awards

Congratulations to Birgit Meyer, Professor of Religious Studies at Utrecht University, who received the Academy Professor Prize from the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and the Spinoza Prize from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NOW). KNAW awards the Academy Professor Prize to researchers for exceptional achievement throughout the course of their careers. The NOW Spinoza Prize is the most prestigious academic award in the Netherlands and tributes Meyer's academic work. Both prizes consist of generous funding for further academic research projects.



calendar

ZMO-COLLOQUIUM 2015/2016: The Future of the City – City of the Future: Envisioning New Forms of Urbanism in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East

• Dr. Ayona Datta, University of Leeds: *India's GIFT: The hubris of technotopia in a future of smart urbanization*, 24 September 2015, 18h, ZMO

Further lectures: 22 October, 26 November, 17 December 2015

OTHER EVENTS

13 September 2015 Tag des offenen Denkmals, German contribution to the European Heritage Days

For further information see: www.zmo.de/veranstaltungen