



**Urban Studies Seminar
2014 - 2015**

Chaired by Prof Ulrike Freitag and Dr Nora Lafi

**Twice a month,
Mondays 5 pm - 7 pm**

Monday, June 29th, 2015, 5 pm

Venue:

Conference Hall
Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33
14129 Berlin-Nikolassee

**Marginality in 18th and 19th Century
Aleppo: Some socio-economic observations**

Lecture by Stefan Knost, (Martin-Luther Universität Halle-Wittenberg)

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A city's margins – its '*faubourgs*' – were often, in the early-modern and modern period, escaping direct control and were clearly separated from the city itself (or the city *intra muros*).

Ottoman Aleppo was one of the major urban centres in the Ottoman Empire, often described as the Empire's 'caravan city' dominating long distance trade with Asia and serving as main *entrepôt* of Asian goods for Europe. Although long distance trade had substantially declined towards the 18th and 19th centuries, Aleppo was still the major trade hub and most important urban centre for a large area stretching from Northern Syria and Iraq to Eastern Anatolia.

Parts of Aleppo's urban space were successfully resisting profound morphological change for centuries. Particularly the city *intra muros*, protected by its medieval wall, preserved a significant part of its medieval structure – the different residential neighbourhoods around the central market district – well into the 20th century. Whereas the different *faubourgs* of Aleppo witnessed dynamic change. We will have a look at these neighbourhoods during the 18th and 19th centuries and examine their 'marginal' character.

From the last decades of the 18th century to the middle of the 19th, Aleppo was on several occasions the theatre of urban violence. Often, the eastern margins of the city were identified as the origin of these disturbances.

The presentation will address this troubled period of Aleppean history from a socio-economic angle. It will not focus on the different clashes and revolts, but examine the social structure of the different *faubourgs* of Aleppo and their development during this period.

The sources for this study are mainly local archival documents – first of all the Sharia Court Records – as well as local chronicles and travelogues.

Stefan Knost is currently teaching at Halle University. He was research associate at the Orient-Institut Beirut and research fellow at the Toyo Bunko (Oriental Library) in Tokyo and the Institut français du Proche-Orient in Damascus. He is researching the early-modern and modern history of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. His dissertation thesis, published in 2009, is entitled: *Die Organisation des religiösen Raums in Aleppo. Die Rolle der islamischen religiösen Stiftungen (auqāf) in der Gesellschaft einer Provinzhauptstadt des Osmanischen Reiches an der Wende zum 19. Jahrhundert.*