



Europa im Nahen Osten
Der Nahe Osten in Europa

Venue:

Conference Hall
Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33

14129 Berlin-Nikolassee

Participants are asked to register at the following address:

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The seminar is part of the activities of the Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) and of 'Cities Compared: Cosmopolitanism in the Mediterranean and Adjacent Regions', a research field within 'Europe in the Middle East - The Middle East in Europe' (EUME), a research program of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, and the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin.

For more information please visit:
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Fritz Thyssen Stiftung
FÜR WISSENSCHAFTSFÖRDERUNG

Invitation ZMO-EUME-Colloquium**Urban Studies Seminar**

Chaired by Prof. Ulrike Freitag and Dr. Nora Lafi
Annual Theme 2010 -2011: *Urban Violence*

Monday, May 2nd, 2011, 5 pm

**To Whom Belong the Streets?
Investment in Public Space and Popular
Contentions in Late Ottoman Damascus****Lecture by Till Grallert**

In March 1878 and again in February 1897 groups of poor Muslim women, mostly wives of conscripts into the Ottoman army, took to the streets of Damascus and demonstrated violently at the seat of the Ottoman governor. They did so in demand for payment of arrears and installments as well as for lower bread prices. In the course of their ultimately futile action, they allegedly cursed the Sultan and presented the officials with the dark and repulsively smelling everyday bread of the masses.

Presenting these and other cases of both concrete and structural violence, the lecture aims at elaborating and discussing some aspects of the changing nature of "the streets" in late Ottoman Damascus.

As the epitome of public place and public space, the term conveys notions of places open to the non-exclusive use of any member of the society, while, at the same time, carrying the ugly grimace of collective fury or homogenous delirium and tranquillity of the masses. Thirdly and somewhat attenuated, "the street" stands short for the public opinion or The Public, with capital letters.

The questions "To whom belong the streets?", scrutinising the negotiations of individual and communal property (legal ownership), of propriety (norms and customs), and of appropriation (social practice), then, is at the core of local social transformations from the Ottoman empire and ancien regime to the modern (nation) state. The latter being a mode within which the dichotomies of male/female and public/private, formal politics, and the "goddess of the house" became hegemonic discourses, female presence on "the streets" became heavily contested if not impossible.

Till Grallert is a PhD candidate at the Berlin Graduate School "Muslim Cultures and Societies" and an affiliated researcher at the Orient Institut Beirut, working on the production of public places and public spaces through collective action in late Ottoman Damascus. He studied history, Islamic and Jewish studies, as well as economics at FU Berlin and received his MA in history from SOAS in 2008.

Presentation of the Seminar

What is the experience of cities in the former territories of the Ottoman Empire - in Asia, Europe and adjacent regions, the Middle East, and North Africa - in dealing with the impact of global changes and the transformation from Empire to nation States? How did people of different cultural, social and religious backgrounds live together? How are examples of conviviality, conflict, migration, and urban regimes of governance and stratification conceptualized? And how have urban traditions been reinterpreted, and what bearing does this have on modern conceptions of civil society, multicultural societies, migration, or cosmopolitanism? This year's Seminar will focus on questions of Urban Violence.

This seminar is supported with funds of the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung.