



ANNEMARIE SCHIMMEL KOLLEG

History and Society during the
Mamluk Era (1250 - 1517)

Newsletter No. 15/ October 2016



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Current Fellows

New Fellows



*Dr. Mathieu
Eychenne*

Project: Mamluk Damascus and its hinterland as a case study



Dr. Boris Liebrez

Project: The endowment of a late Mamluk physician in Damascus



Carine Juvin

Project: Inscribed objects in the late Mamluk period: materializing the message, emphasizing the status



Adriana Gaspar

Project: Early Ottoman cities in a comparative perspective: the case of Temesvar



Christian Mauder

Project: In the Sultan's salon: learning, religion and rulership at the Mamluk court of Qāniṣawh al-Ghawrī (r. 1501-1516)



Shireen El Kassem

Project: Mamluk textiles: changing patterns in Mamluk clothing and its impact in the Mediterranean

Other current Fellows



Tarek Sabraa

Project: Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī wa-‘ā’ilatuhu wa-dawruhum fī al-ḥayāt al-‘ilmiyya ḥilāl al-‘asr al-mamlūkiyy al-‘awwal



The purpose of this year's Fall School was to introduce participants to the methods, sources, and lines of inquiry in studying medieval *fatwas*. It grew out of the Annual Programming Theme of the Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg in 2015-2016, which is Environmental Approaches to Mamluk Studies. *Fatwas* are a rich, though under-utilized, source for documenting conflicts of water access and rights, and control of and use of a range of natural resources. They are an invaluable window on legal institutions (including more "popular" and informal ones), as well as conflict resolution on the local level, relations of "state and society", and local values and ethics.

The instructors, internationally known specialists in their fields, include:

- Prof. Dr. Yossef Rapoport (Queen Mary University of London) - private law *fatwas*
- Prof. Dr. David Stephan Powers (Cornell University) - *fatwas* concerning riparian disputes in the Middle Atlas Mountains, ca. 683-824/1285-1421
- Prof. Dr. Daniella Talmon-Heller (Ben Gurion University of the Negev) - religious life and history (based on a corpus of Ibn Taymiyya)
- Prof. Dr. Stuart Borsch (Assumption College) - water issues, Mamluk Egypt
- Prof. Dr. Thomas Eich (Hamburg University) - *Fatwas* on Pre-Natal Life

10th–11th/10/16 Workshop - Environmental Disasters in Mamluk Egypt and Syria



Environmental disasters in the pre-modern Middle East were replete in occurrence and rife with consequence. From the awful mortalities of the Black Death to the visitations of cold and desiccation in the little Ice Age, all manner of tragedy struck the inhabitants of this part of the world, leaving scarcely a single generation untouched by major calamity. Disasters brought suffering and left memories of their trauma, passed along in narratives that color the historical chronicles. But disasters also brought change – for good or for ill – some of it profound and long-term in nature. Scholars of the Middle East have only recently become aware of how closely natural disasters are tied in to long-term historical change. Furthermore, these same disasters tell us so much about the changes themselves. Disasters open for us windows of perception, through which we can see social, economic and even intellectual evolutions with awestruck clarity. It is in this light that we glimpse causation and consequence via the interpretive examination of centuries' old tragedies. This workshop fostered research into the history of these natural disasters in the Middle East, focusing on Mamluk Egypt and Syria, 1250 to 1517 CE. There was much ground to cover amid the fertile terrain for innovative research. While Mamluk Egypt was recognized

for its wealth of sources for natural disaster, the workshop also highlighted the degree to which Syria is even richer – and much of its ground wholly untilled.

The workshop served as a vehicle which furthered and fostered in-depth research into natural disasters of the Mamluk period in all of their manifestations: floods, fires, earthquakes, epidemics, weather episodes, droughts – and even plagues of vermin and insect. And as the workshop examined the expanse of disaster in its widest array, it also encouraged the pursuit of inquiry with new tools and fresh perspectives, some of them drawn from the work being conducted by historians of Europe. The workshop was successful in creating a venue for the sharing of evidentiary detail and investigatory agenda and it helped us survey the potential for more robust documentation – exploring the use of new tools for the historical interpretation of natural disaster. The workshop thus engaged the collecting and organizing of data pertinent to the inception, longevity, frequency, and mortality of natural catastrophes in the region – and at the same time demonstrated the possibilities for examining the short and long term socioeconomic and intellectual impact that these disasters held for Egypt, the Levant, and the wider world.

Prof. Dr. Bethany WALKER
and Prof. Dr. Stuart BORSCH

Upcoming Events

11/11/2016 – Prof. Dr. Hugh Kennedy (SOAS, London), 10-12 a.m

Caliphate: an idea through history

(Venue: Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg “History and Society during the Mamluk Era, 1250-1517”, Heussallee 18-24)

28/11/2016 – Prof. Dr. Detlef Gronenborn, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

The proto-Islamic burial site of Durbi Takusheyi near Katsina, Northern Nigeria

(Venue: Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg “History and Society during the Mamluk Era, 1250-1517”, Heussallee 18-24)

30/11/2016 – Prof. Dr. Timothy Insoll (Manchester), 4-6 p.m.

Research themes in Islamic archaeology in sub-Saharan Africa

(Venue: Research Unit of Islamic Archaeology in Brüler Str.7, 53119 Bonn)

International Conference

5th -7th December 2016

Environmental Approaches in Pre-Modern Middle Eastern Studies

Defined in as many different ways as there are disciplines in the humanities, environmental history is the study of relations between people and their natural environment through time. On one level, it offers perspectives on the impact of climatic and other environmental changes on society, and on another it is a window on the varied ways people make use of, understand, control, and maintain their natural re-

sources. Rejecting the outdated models of environmental determinism, environmental historians tend to either study the environment as a very powerful actor in socio-cultural change or as the locus of social conflict. Environmental history can be a potent tool for contextualizing political change and explaining the complex combination of factors behind dynastic decline in pre-modern societies. It is, in short, uniquely positioned for writing holistic histories.

Environmental history also provides a useful tool for social, legal (laws and ethics related to the management and equitable access to scarce resources, and disputes over them), and intellectual history (perceptions of the natural environment – color, space, etc.); urban studies (the “Islamic garden”, urban gardening and the development of urban “green spaces”); and, most importantly, the study of knowledge transfer (the agrarian manuals). Social history can certainly benefit from such lines of inquiry.

This international conference is meant to be a forum for exchange of ideas about environmental history, and methods and theories, by scholars engaged in the study of the pre-modern Islamic world. Papers from the fields of history, historical geography, archaeology and art history, natural sciences, and historical anthropology are most welcome, as well as studies of a more theoretical (but historically grounded) nature. We welcome the participation of doctoral students and post-doctoral scholars, as well as senior scholars. The chronological coverage is the period of the Islamic Conquests until the early nineteenth-century (pre-Tanzimat), with a geographical coverage of all regions of the world under the control of an Islamic regime. While our focus remains the Mamluk (and the larger “Middle Islamic”) period

period of the 13th-16th centuries and the territories of the Mamluk state – and while we aim to promote environmental lines of inquiry in Mamluk Studies – this conference encourages trans-regional and comparative approaches and particularly welcomes papers from Ottoman Studies.

International Research Colloquium

(Venue: Library – IOA/Department of Islamic Studies, Regina-Pacis-Weg 7)

28/10/2016 Dr. Sonja Hegasy (Berlin): *From Memory to History – In the Aftermath of Morocco's Equity and Reconciliation Commission*

04/11/2016 – Prof. Dr. Ulrike Schmieder (Hannover)
Slavery-Postemancipation-Memories. Two case studies in the Caribbean and their entanglements with European histories and memories

11/11/2016 – Prof. Dr. Elisabetta Ragagnin (Berlin)
Turkic languages in Mongolia: continuity and change

18/11/2016 – Prof. Dr. Ludwig Paul (Hamburg)
Persian as Lingua Franca in India and the Ottoman Empire

25/11/2016 – Dr. Gulchekhra Sutonova (Academy of Science, Tashkent, Uzbekistan)
Discussion on power legitimation and transformation in Foreign policy: New sources for Bukhara Mangits

02/12/2016 – Prof. Dr. Marie-Janine Calic (Munich)
Trans-Imperial Biographies in the Ottoman Balkans

09/12/2016 – Dr. Hannah Barker (Rhodes College, Memphis, Tennessee)
"Egyptian and Italian Merchants in the Black Sea Slave Trade, 1260-1500"

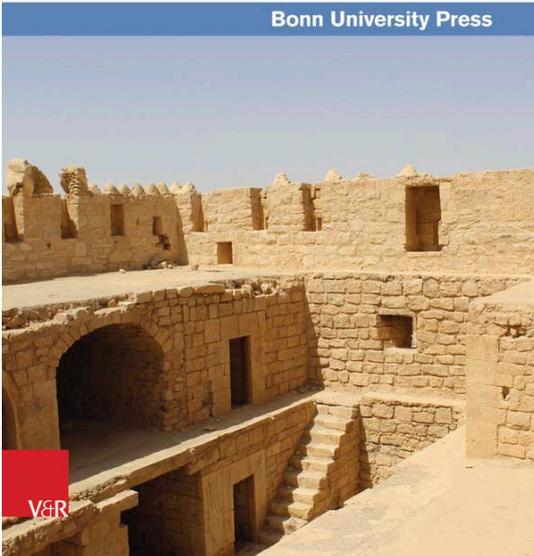
16/12/2016 – Prof. Dr. Schirin Amir-Moazami (Berlin)
Inspecting Muslims: Knowledge/Power and the 'Muslim Question' in Europe

Publications

Stephan Conermann / Gül Şen (eds.)

The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition

Bonn University Press



http://www.v-r.de/en/the_mamluk_ottoman_transition/t-211/1087084/

Stephan Conermann, Gül Şen (Eds.)

The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition

Continuity and Change in Egypt and Bilād al-Shām in the Sixteenth Century

This edited volume will be published by Bonn University Press at V&R unipress in November 2016.

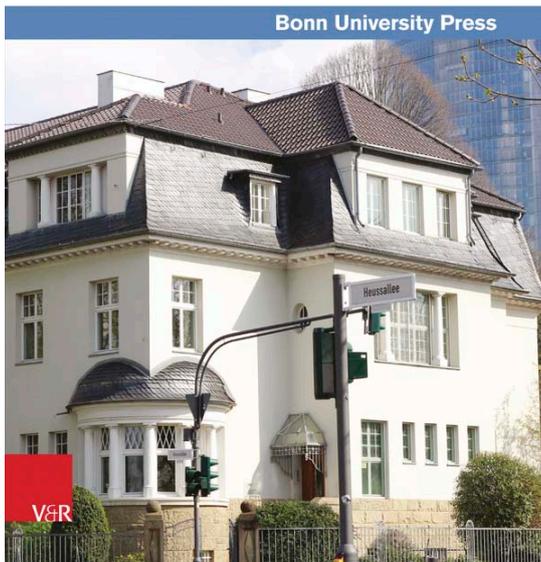
The essays discuss continuity and change in Bilad al Sham (Greater Syria) during the sixteenth century, examining to what extent Egypt and Greater Syria were affected by the transition from Mamluk to Ottoman rule. This is explored in a variety of areas: diplomatic relations, histories and historiography, fiscal and agricultural administration, symbolic orders, urban developments, local perspectives and material culture. In order to rethink the sixteenth century from a transitional perspective and thus overcome the conventional dynasty-centered fields of research Mamlukists and Ottomanists have been brought together, shedding light on the remarkable sixteenth century, so decisive for the formation of early modern Muslim empires.

Publications

Stephan Conermann (ed.)

History and Society during the Mamluk Period (1250–1517)

Studies of the Annemarie Schimmel Institute for Advanced Study II



<https://www.mamluk.uni-bonn.de/publications/mamluk-studies>

»Mamluk Studies« is the first series that is exclusively dedicated to the history, culture and society of the Mamluk Era (1250–1517). It contains source editions,

monographs, collections of articles, and conference proceedings in English, French, and German. The Mamluk Empire is a historically unique model of a society. A predominantly Arabic population was dominated by a purely Turkish-born elite of manumitted military slaves who sought to regenerate themselves continuously through a self-imposed fiat. The only person who could become a Mamluk was a Turk who had been born free outside the Islamic territories as a non-Muslim, then enslaved, brought to Egypt, converted to Islam, freed, and finally, trained as a warrior. Only those who met these prerequisites were members of the ruling stratum with all the concomitant political, military, and economic advantages. Patrons and companions provided the individual, rootless Mamluk with a place and support in society. The flipside of this esprit de corps was intra-Mamluk rivalry between the various families, a resulting lack of internal cohesion of the Mamluk ruling caste, and in particular, the loss of power upon the deposition or death of a protector. But despite these pre-programmed tensions inherent to the system, the model of the Mamluk »single-generation military aristocracy« seems to have had a considerable stabilizing effect. At least, it is safe to assume that the longevity of Mamluk rule over the autochthonous clientage of Egypt and Syria is also, or even primarily a result of the Mamluk principle of constant regeneration.

Imprint

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