

International Conference  
13-15 July 2017  
Freie Universität Berlin

## What was Philology in Arabic?

الفيلولوجيا العربية الإسلامية بعد حقبة التأسيس

### Arabic-Islamic Textual Practices in the Early Modern World

Although philology has always been a global knowledge practice, no such account of its history has ever been written. Indeed, wherever texts exist, a method of making sense of them has existed as well. This conference is dedicated to investigating the neglected history of Arabic-Islamic textual practices and interpretative methods in the early modern world. What forms did these methods take in Arabic-Islamic scholarship before the encounter with European philology? How do salient aspects of the philological method, such as care for textual difference and variation, attention to contingency and change, and the need to make texts accessible and available, appear in Arabic philology, and what has become of them after this encounter?

Three interrelated areas will be covered:

1. Text critical practices
2. The growth and evolution of texts
3. The Arabic Cosmopolis

'Arabic-Islamic textual practices' refers to a range of scholarly practices and interpretative methods engaging with texts, written and oral, including religious, historiographical, legal, literary, and scientific. How did Arabic-Islamic scholarship approach the vagaries of establishing texts, verifying and transmitting them and detecting corruption and forgery? How did scholars recognize and cope with human error, bias and lapse of memory? What traditional disciplines engaged in such methodological matters?

The conference also aims to **investigate the growth and evolution of Arabic texts**. Dismissed by previous scholarship as 'secondary' and 'repetitive'. We will consider commentaries and glosses as original texts in their own right. Accordingly, we will examine the ways in which they were produced and how they flourished in early modern Arabic textual communities as *loci* of philological practices and methods.



Moreover, the conference aims to encourage **a global perspective on Arabic textual practices**. In viewing Arabic script as a global script adopted by diverse literary communities from West Africa to South Asia, the conference will explore the reach and impact of Arabic textual practices throughout the Arabic cosmopolis, including South Asian, African, and Malay and Indonesian textual communities. Arabic script allowed diverse and disparate cultural communities to exchange literary knowledge across long distances.

The event is funded by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation and the German Research Foundation (DFG).

### **Time and Venue**

13.07.2017 – 15.07.2017

Lecture Hall -1.2009 (Fabeckstr. 23-25, 14195 Dahlem Dorf - Berlin)

### **More Information**

The conference is organised by the Dahlem International Network Research Group “Arabic Philology and Textual Practices in the Early Modern Period” at the Seminar for Semitic and Arabic Studies, Freie Universität Berlin (Prof. Islam Dayeh, Colinda Lindermann, Rossella De Luca, Katharina Kloss).

### **Contact and Registration**

Registration via the Website: [www.fu-berlin.de/geschkult/whatwasphilology](http://www.fu-berlin.de/geschkult/whatwasphilology)

