

Workshop

Rethinking Late Antiquity and Islam

June 24, 9am – 8pm

Venue

Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Einsteinsaal, Jägerstr. 22–23, 10117 Berlin

Convened by

Seminar für Arabistik und Semitistik, Freie Universität Berlin (Angelika Neuwirth)
Corpus Coranicum, Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften (Michael Marx)

Speakers

Daniel Boyarin (University of California, Berkeley / WIKO Fellow 2012-13)
Garth Fowden (National Hellenic Research Foundation, Athens / WIKO Fellow 2012-13)
Peter Gemeinhardt (Universität Göttingen)
Lutz Greisiger (Universität Halle–Wittenberg)
Andreas Kaplony (Universität München)
Elizabeth Key Fowden (WIKO Berlin 2012-13)
Michael Marx (Corpus Coranicum, BBAW)
Mischa Meier (Universität Tübingen)
Angelika Neuwirth (Freie Universität Berlin)
Christian Robin (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris)

Objectives

The workshop focuses on the concept of Late Antiquity. The term *Late Antiquity* in historical studies is used to designate an epoch, whose extension is, however, contested. According to the prevailing view established in the “Peter Brown School” it would cover the period from 200 to 750 CE. More recent scholarly work, though, carried out in projects such as *EDRIS* (Göttingen), *Corpus Coranicum* (Berlin), *SFB 980 “Episteme in Bewegung”* (Berlin) or Garth Fowden’s “*The First Millennium: from Augustus to Avicenna*” and Daniel Boyarin’s “*Dispersing Diaspora*” has called the current view into question. The striking evidence of closely related argumentative patterns and stratagems that underpin the radical transformations which “antique” texts and concepts went through with the establishment of the three scriptural religions, renders the delineations proposed until now highly implausible. Peter Brown’s concession of a continuation of Late Antiquity into the Umayyad era (until 750) is elusive, since it exclusively engages with the situation of the Christian population in the early Islamic state. Any epochal classification that is teleologically oriented toward the later emerging “Europe” necessarily has to resort to pulling out early Islam (including the Qur’an) from its ancestral embedding in a late ancient landscape of debate – an essentialist view that calls for revision. The dissociation of Late An-

tiquity from political rule and its re-allocation not in a political but in an epistemic space and the reflection about a new overarching epochal category such as the „First Millennium” are urgently required to accommodate the currently vindicated new readings of texts and concepts across the boundaries of languages and religious cultures. The “rededication” of Late Antiquity would allow to relocate the three scriptural religious cultures in a shared space: the landscape of debate that for centuries defined the pluricultural Mediterranean.

**Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Einsteinsaal,
Jägerstr. 22-23, 10117 Berlin
Monday, June 24, 2013**

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| 9.00 – 9.30 | Welcome and Introduction
Michael Marx (Corpus Coranicum, BBAW)
Angelika Neuwirth (Freie Universität Berlin) |
| 9.30 – 10.15 | Peter Gemeinhardt (Universität Göttingen)
<i>More than an Epoch: Late Antiquity and the History of Christianity</i> |
| 10.15 – 11.00 | Daniel Boyarin (University of California, WIKO Fellow 2012-13) <i>Did the Jewish People have a Middle Age?</i> |
| 11.00 – 11.30 | Break |
| 11.30 – 12.15 | Andreas Kaplony (Universität München)
<i>The Arabization and Islamization of Administration as mirrored in Greek- and-Arabic Documents (6th – 8th Century)</i> |
| 12.15 – 13.00 | Elizabeth Key Fowden (WIKO Berlin 2012-13)
<i>Late antique Space and Spolia: Architecture as Discourse</i> |
| 13.00 – 15.00 | Break |
| 15.00 – 15.45 | Christian Robin (CNRS Paris)
<i>Arabia before the year 1000: on the Genesis of Islam in Light of Inscriptions and Narrative Sources</i> |
| 15.45 – 16.30 | Mischa Meier (Universität München)
<i>Liturgification and Hyper-Sacralization: The Declining Importance of Imperial Piety in Constantinople between the 6th and 7th Century A.D.</i> |
| 16.30 – 17.15 | Lutz Greisiger (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
<i>“Imperial Eschatology” in the Syriac Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius and its Antecedents</i> |
| 17.15 – 18.00 | Break |
| 18.00 – 20.00 | Garth Fowden (NHRF Athens, WIKO Fellow 2012-13)
<i>“The First Millennium”</i> |