

Curriculum Vitae

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Personal Details **Manolis Ulbricht, M. A.**

Male, born 1983 in Berlin, Germany

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Since Sept. 2011 **PhD Student of Byzantine Studies** at the *Freie Universität Berlin*, Working title:

[The first translation of the Quran \(8/9th c.\) and its use by Nicetas of Byzantium \(9th c.\) in his 'Refutation of the Quran' – a heresiological approach of his polemical works](#)

Prof. Dr. Jannis Niehoff-Panagiotidis (Byzantine Studies, supervisor I)

Prof. Dr. Angelika Neuwirth (Arabic Studies, supervisor II)

Summary of the PhD

My PhD project aims to examine the very first translation of the Quran, which is a Greek translation from the 8/9th century CE, and to compare it with the original Arabic text. The translation by an anonymous author, while generally very accurate, contains some textually subtle, but theologically highly important differences with respect to the Arabic text. It seems to be the result of a Christian hermeneutical reading of the Quran.

This translation was used in a Byzantine polemic against Islam (the so-called "Refutation of the Quran" – referred to in the following as *Anatropē*) by Nicetas of Byzantium (9th c.). Additionally, and beyond the comparison, I shall analyse the use of the Greek translation in Nicetas' *Anatropē*, which is its main source (Vat. gr. 681). In a final section, I will contextualise the *Anatropē* with Nicetas' other apologetic works against the Catholics and the Armenians. I do this in order to determine whether Nicetas considered Islam a Christian heresy – as did other apologetic writers before him – or if he understood it as a new, independent religion.

My research project is related to Quranic studies and it characterises one of the most important, albeit little known Byzantine polemicists. Nicetas is one of the first who uses the Quran itself for the refutation of the Islamic faith. His attempt had a vast influence on later Byzantine and even mediaeval European apologetic writing against Islam. Nicetas lived during the 'Macedonian Renaissance' in Constantinople in a period of thriving military and intellectual activities and a climate of intercultural exchange with the Muslim 'Abbāsid caliphate. My research will help to shed light on the 'Macedonian Renaissance', its intellectual life and external relations with the Arab neighbours.

Education

- Oct. 2010 – Sept. 2012 Research in Damascus (Syria)
- Education in Quran, Islamic doctrine and Hadith at the *Umayyad Mosque*, Damascus
 - Research trips to Orthodox monasteries in the Middle East (Lebanon; Egypt)
Monasteries of Hamatūra (1 month), Balamand, Bkeftin; St. Catherine's Monastery/ Sinai, etc.
 - Arabic language course at the *Institut français du Proche-Orient*, 2010–2011 (highest level)
- April 2003 – Oct. 2010 Studies at the *Freie Universität Berlin* (Germany) (Magister Artium, final grade 1,0 = 100 %)
- History major, Hellenistic & Byzantine era; Islamic Studies minor, Quranic studies & Early Islam; Theology *Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin* – minor, Orthodoxy/ Eastern churches & Doctrinal history
- Final thesis (final grade 1,0 = 100 %)
- “Die Fragmente einer griechischen Koranübersetzung der Handschrift Vat. gr. 681”
[‘The fragments of a Greek translation of the Quran from the manuscript Vat. gr. 681’]
- Oct. 2005 – Sept. 2007 Studies of Orthodox Theology & Ancient History at the *National University of Athens* (Greece)
- Oct. 2002 – March 2003 Studies of Economic engineering (Technische Universität Berlin, Germany)
- Aug. 2000 – June 2002 Baccalaureate at the *Fichtenberg-Oberschule* (Berlin, Germany) (final grade 1,5 = 95 %)
- Major subjects: French and Music
- Sept. 1999 – July 2000 11th class at the *Unidad Educativa Instituto Experimental* (Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela)

Work Experience

- Dec. 2008 – Nov. 2012 Student assistant and service contracts (‘Werkverträge’) of Prof. Dr. Heinz Ohme (Chair for Eastern Churches and Christian Confessional Studies, HU Berlin)
- Project Area Translating Byzantine & Latin sources concerning ‘Great Schism’ (1054) & ‘Photian Schism’ (9th c.)
- March 2008 – Sept. 2010 Associate at the Project *Corpus Coranicum* of Prof. Dr. Angelika Neuwirth (Berlin-Brandenburgisch Academy of Sciences)
- Project Area Editing late-antique Greek texts related to the Quran
- March 2008 – Dec. 2008 Student assistant of Prof. Dr. Hans-Joachim Gehrke (President of the German Archaeological Institute, central office in Berlin)
- Project Area Redaction of the journal ‘Klio’; collaboration at the Project ‘Fragments of the Greek Historians V’
- July – Sept. 2005 Internship at *Capacity Building International, Germany* (InWEnt gGmbH) (Branch: Amman, Jordan)
- Project Area EMWater Project: Efficient Management of Wastewater
- Oct. 2003 – Febr. 2004 Internship at *Shanghai Volkswagen Co., Ltd.* (Branch: Shanghai/ Anting, PR China)
- Project Area Planning department/ Car body construction: cycle time reduction of the VW-Polo 240 and 241

Languages

German (native), Greek (native, Athens 2005–2007), Arabic (business fluent, Syria 2010–2012), Spanish (business fluent, Venezuela 1999–2000), English (fluent), French (fluent, Québec/ Canada & Lyon/ France 2001), Chinese (elementary, China 2003–2004), Ancient languages: Hebrew (grade 1,0 = 100 %), Classical Greek (grade 1,0 = 100 %), Latin (grade 1,1 = 98 %)

Scholarships

German National Academic Foundation (PhD since Sept. 2011), German Academical Exchange Service (DAAD) (Syria 2010/11), FU Berlin (PROMOS) (language course, Damascus 2010), Friedrich Ebert Foundation (2006–2010), DAAD (Damascus 2006), ERASMUS (Athens 2005/06)

Publications

- Interview [Der Tagesspiegel – “Es war eine Entscheidung von Tag zu Tag”, 08/12/2012, S. B6](#)
[‘A decision from day to day’ – Interview about my research in Syria from 2010–2012]
- Scientific contributions
- الترجمة الأولى للقرآن الكريم من القرن ٨ / ٩ م في سجال نيكيتاس البيزنطي (القرن ٩ م) مع الإسلام باسم «تفنيد القرآن» [In Arabic: ‘La première traduction du Coran du 8/9ème siècle et son utilisation dans la polémique de Nicetas de Byzance (9ème siècle) avec le titre «Réfutation du Coran»’], [Chronos – Revue d’histoire de l’Université de Balamand/ Lebanon, n. 25, 2012, pp. 33–58](#)
 - “Euthymios, the monk”, [Christian-Muslim-Relation, vol. 3, Leiden \(Brill\), 2011, pp. 523–531](#)
 - “Nicetas of Byzantium”, [Lexikon Byzantinischer Autoren](#) [forthcoming]
 - “Euthymios Monachos”, [Lexikon Byzantinischer Autoren](#) [forthcoming]
- Review
- “K. Förstel: Schriften zum Islam von Arethas und Euthymios Zigabenos und Fragmente der griechischen Koranübersetzung”, [Journal of Religious and Cultural Studies, vol. 62.4 \(2010\), Leiden \(Brill\), pp. 394–397](#)
- Translations
[From Spanish into German]
- [Fragments of the Greek Historians V](#)
Translations of the contributions of Prof. Dr. González Ponce (60 p.), Brill Online *Reference Works* “[Zenothemis](#)” (FgrHist 2054), “[Phileas von Athen](#)” (FGrHist 2038) [forthcoming], “[Alexandros von Myndos](#)” (FgrHist 2201) [forthcoming], “[Euthymenes von Massalia](#)” (FgrHist 2207) [forthcoming]
- ## Presentations and Conference Invitations
- 17/05/2013 “[Το Βυζάντιο – η πρώτη επαφή της Ευρώπης με το Ισλάμ](#)” [In Greek: ‘Byzantium – Europe’s first contact with Islam’], [7th Athens Postgraduate Conference](#), University of Athens (Greece)
- 01/02/2013 “Die byzantinische Koranübersetzung: Christliche Hermeneutisierung oder frühe Koranpolemik?”, [Arbeitstagung der deutschen Byzantinistik AG](#), Köln (Germany)
- 01–05/10/2012 Paper at [The Dynamic Middle Ages – International PhD and post-doctoral training school, Higher School of Economics & German Historical Institute](#), Moscow (Russia)
Participation financed by the [Gerda Henkel Foundation, National Research University Higher School of Economics/ Moscow](#) and the [German Historical Institute Moscow](#)
- 21–28/08/2012 Member of [The European Delegation](#) to the [Harvard Project for Asian and International Relations \(HPAIR\) 2012 conference](#), Taipei (Taiwan)
Participation financed by the [Charitable Hertie Foundation](#) & the [Taiwan Foundation for Democracy](#)
- 09/05/2012 القرآن بين الأصل والترجمة: نيكيتاس البيزنطي وترجمة القرآن اليونانية في سجالة ضد الإسلام (القرن ٩ م) [In Arabic: ‘[The Quran between original and translation: Nicetas of Byzance and his ‘Refutation of the Quran’ \(9th c.\)](#)’], [Institut français du Proche-Orient](#), Beirut (Lebanon)
- 08/05/2012 “The Greek Qur’ān Translation of the Vat. gr. 681: Polemical Interpolation or Christian Interpretation?”, [Orient-Institut Beirut](#) (Lebanon)
- 14/03/2011 “[Translation as transformation: The first translation of the Qur’ān into Greek \(8/9th c. A. D.\)](#)”, [Institut français du Proche-Orient](#), Damascus (Syria)
- 01–02/10/2010 Chapel Hill (USA): Participant at “[War, Expansion, and the Problem of Sovereignty: The European, Islamic, and New Worlds, 1000–1700](#)”, [University of North Carolina](#)
Participation financed by the [Center for Cooperation](#) of the FU Berlin for junior scientists