

During the 18th and 19th centuries the topos of Al-Andalus ("Golden Spain") played a major role in Jewish reflections on the so called emancipation of Western Judaism. Recently this topos has been unmasked as a myth motivated by other reasons than an interest in the historical relationship between medieval Judaism and Islam: the alleged Muslim-Jewish symbiosis in medieval Spain tended to be invoked as a model for Jewish adaption, for instance to German society and culture. In the 19th and 20th centuries, however, several Western Jewish scholars went beyond this paradigm, differing at the same time from the approach of the non-Jewish Orientalists, who wrote first and foremost as theologians. Most of the Jewish scholars of Oriental Studies refrained from participating in the search for cultural origins that was so typical for Religious Studies in the 19th century and were interested in other purposes than reconstructing the cultural roots of (Christian) Europe.

This conference focuses on a group of Jewish scholars who endeavored to keep the memory of medieval Jewish productivity alive by asking how it took shape within its Islamic environment. While fully applying the scholarly methods of Western historicism to Islam, they were very much aware to what degree the latter were context-dependent. They were, therefore, less interested in cultural purity than in the processes of cultural mixing and overlapping. What kind of epistemology was it that enabled them to perceive Islam with empathy and, at the same time, to reflect on cultural difference without being compelled to engage in „othering“? And how relevant can their theoretical insights in cultural dynamics be for the attempt of religions in the present to negotiate between adaptation and continuity?

#### Organized by

Martin-Buber-Professur für Jüdische Religionsphilosophie  
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#### Location

Goethe University Frankfurt  
Campus Westend  
Grüneburgplatz 1  
60323 Frankfurt am Main  
Casino, Room 1.801

**Participation is free, no registration is required.**

#### Contact:

Dr. Ottfried Fraisse  
Email: fraisse@rz.uni-frankfurt.de

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# BEYOND THE MYTH OF "GOLDEN SPAIN": PATTERNS OF ISLAMIZATION IN MODERN JEWISH SCHOLARSHIP ON ISLAM

8-9  
JULY  
2014

Goethe University Frankfurt/M.,  
Campus Westend, Casino 1.801

„**Islamici nil a me alienum puto**“ –  
„I consider nothing Islamic foreign to me“

A modification of the famous phrase „Homo sum: humani nil a me alienum puto“ – „I am a human being: I consider nothing human foreign to me“, from Terence, *Heauton Timorumenos*.

## TUESDAY, 8 JULY 2014

■ 9:30 Welcome / Introduction

**Matthias Lutz-Bachmann** (Vice-President, Goethe University Frankfurt/M.)

**Christian Wiese** (Goethe University Frankfurt/M.)

**Ottfried Fraise** (Goethe University Frankfurt/M.)

## I. Medieval Perspectives in Modern Jewish Research on Islam

■ 9:45–12:30

Chair: Christian Wiese (Goethe University Frankfurt/M.)

**Yossef Schwartz** (Tel Aviv University)

Arabic Spirit between Philology and Nostalgia: From the Tibbonides to Steinschneider (and Beyond)

**Irene Zwiep** (Universiteit van Amsterdam)

Conceptualizing Religion(s) in Late Nineteenth-Century Jewish Cultural Hermeneutics: Steinschneider on Judaism and Islam

**Gideon Libson** (The Hebrew University Jerusalem)

Shlomo Dov Goitein: Scientific Work between Jewish and Muslim Traditions

■ 12:30 Lunch

## II. Islam in Modern Jewish Research on Medieval Philosophy (I)

■ 14:15–15:45

Chair: Amir Engel (Goethe University Frankfurt/M.)

**Ottfried Fraise** (Goethe University Frankfurt/M.)

Martin Schreiner's Unpublished 'Systematic Philosophy of Religion': Adapting Ignác Goldziher's Method of Researching Judaism and Islam

**Miriam Frenkel** (The Hebrew University Jerusalem)

"In my Spirit I am closer to the Traditionalists than to those called 'Path Breakers': Samuel Poznański, Conservative or Pioneer?

■ 15:45 Coffee

## III. Islam in Modern Jewish Research on Medieval Philosophy (2)

■ 16:15–17:45

Chair: Irene Zwiep (Universiteit van Amsterdam)

**Steven Harvey** (Bar Ilan University)

The Story of a Twentieth-Century Jewish Scholar's Discovery of Plato's Political Philosophy in Tenth-century Islam – Leo Strauss's Early Interest in the Islamic *Falāsifa*

**Paul Fenton** (Université de Paris IV – Sorbonne)

French Orientalists from Salomon Munk to George Vajda: Models of Jewish Research into Islam

## Keynote Lecture

■ 18:15

Chair: Christian Wiese (Goethe University Frankfurt/M.)

**Norman Stillman** (University of Oklahoma):

*Islamici nil a me alienum puto*: The Mindset of Jewish Scholars of Islamic Studies

■ 19:30 Reception

## WEDNESDAY, 9 JULY 2014

## IV. German Jewish Orientalists between Orientalism and Islamization

■ 9:30–12:15

Chair: Ottfried Fraise (Goethe University Frankfurt/M.)

**Yuval Ervi** (Tel Aviv University / Eume, Berlin)

Between Berlin and Jerusalem: A.S. Yahuda's Struggle over the Representation of the Sephardic Legacy in the Jewish Scientific and Political Discourse

**Noah Gerber** (The Hebrew University Jerusalem)

From German-Jewish Orientalism to the Study of Jewish History in Islamic Orbits: The Case of Walter J. Fischel

**Reinhard Schulze** (University of Bern)

Merging Identities: Orientalism and Islamization in the Work of Leopold Weiss, Hugo Marcus and Lev Nussimbaum

■ 12:15 Lunch

## V. Jewish Research on Islam: Consequences and Perspectives

■ 13:30–15:00

Chair: Yossef Schwartz (Tel Aviv University)

**Muhammad Abu Samra** (Tel Aviv University)

The Actuality of Ignác Goldziher's Research into Islam: Its Reception in Contemporary Arab Islamic Thought

**Hanan Harif** (The Hebrew University Jerusalem)

Orientalism as a Bridge? Josef Horowitz, Avraham Shalom Yahuda, and S. D. Goitein on the 'Arab Question'

## Final Discussion

■ 15:00–15:30