

The Reinvention of Tradition: Islamic Thought in the Age of Print (Fellowship am Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO), von Prof. Ahmed El Shamsy)

Initiative: Postdoctoral Fellowships in den Geisteswissenschaften an Universitäten und Forschungsinstituten
in Deutschland und den USA

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The goal of this project is to produce the first book-length study of the adoption of printing by Muslim scholars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the influence that this new technology had on the very definition of the Islamic tradition. The new medium permitted scholars to open up the rarefied realm of manuscript texts to a broad audience through edition and publication. But the wave of published editions of medieval works that followed did not simply reveal the premodern intellectual heritage; it created it. The scholars' selection of works to edit and popularize and the ways in which they went about the work of editing were guided by competing religious and sociopolitical agendas, each embodying a particular vision of religious authority and the nature of Islamic scholarship. The dynamic produced by the rivalry among the agendas of scholastics, classicists, Orientalists, neo-traditionalists, and reformists gave rise to what both Muslims and non-Muslim scholars of Islam today have come to consider the "classical tradition" of Islam.

Projektbeteiligte

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