

## Crossing Boundaries, Creating Images (KHI Florence, 22 May 2008)

Jana Gaul

Images" and lecture "Manipulating Histories" by Prof. Shalem (KHI  
Florence, 22 May 2008)

Crossing Boundaries, Creating Images: In Search of the Prophet  
Muhammad in Literary and Visual Traditions

A Presentation of Work in Progress of the Research Group directed by  
Prof. Dr. Avinoam Shalem, Max-Planck-Fellow

Thursday, 22 May 2008

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz - Max-Planck-Institut, Florence

11:00

Introductory Remarks

Prof. Dr. Gerhard Wolf

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz

11:10

Introduction to the Research Project

Prof. Dr. Avinoam Shalem

Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

11:20

From Primordial Flux to the "Perfect Man":

The Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Texts and Images

Asst. Prof. Dr. Christiane Gruber

Indiana University, Bloomington

11:50

Break and light refreshments

12:00

Machometus, Mahum, and Maometto:

The Prophet Muhammad in Latin and

Romance Literary Traditions

Dr. Michelina Di Cesare

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz

12:30

The Ambiguous Portrait:

Picturing the Prophet Muhammad in Printed European Translations of the Qur'an

Alberto Saviello, M.A.

Heinrich-Heine-Universität, Düsseldorf

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18:00

Avinoam Shalem: Manipulating Histories. The 'Golden Age' in Al-Andalus as Remembered

Evening lecture of the workshop "Iberische Bildkulturen: Grenzen und Kongruenzen"

In cooperation with the Graduiertenkolleg "Bild-Körper-Medium. Eine anthropologische Perspektive" at the HfG Karlsruhe

The term 'Golden Age' is frequently associated with the art and culture that developed in the Iberian Peninsula during a period of seven hundred years stretching from 711 to 1492, namely from the Arab conquest to the fall of the last Nasrid stronghold in Granada. The concept of a past Muslim Golden Era in Spain seems to play an important role not only in the eyes of historians, art historians, and even the general public in the west but also in the Muslim Orient. Why was the Iberian Peninsula- or al-Andalus as it was and is known in the Arab World- during the period of Muslim rule and especially after its decline came to known as a 'Golden Age'? - a term which is usually reserved to describe other moments in history, when specific societies succeeded in developing and maintaining flourishing economic, scientific, and cultural atmospheres like those associated with Jerusalem of King Salomon, Baghdad of Harun al-Rashid, Florence of the Medici's, Venice of Titian and Tintoretto, and Alexandria of Forster and Kawafy.

In this short paper several specific aspects that contributed to the conceptual creation of the Golden Age in Muslim Spain, by Christian and Muslim writers alike, are briefly discussed. Moreover the tendency to glorify Muslim Spain, namely creating an imagined medieval story for this region, is critically interpreted as part of exorcizing Islam from the history of Europe and forging a Christian Spanish collective identity. Finally, the nostalgic tone of exilic literature, be it by Arab or Jewish authors, will be discussed as a contributing element to foster this myth as well.

Contact and further information:

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Reference:

ANN: Crossing Boundaries, Creating Images (KHI Florence, 22 May 2008). In: ArtHist.net, May 15, 2008  
(accessed Aug 2, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/30481>>.