

Contact

DFG Center for Advanced Study
“RomanIslam – Center for Comparative Empire and
Transcultural Studies”
Universität Hamburg
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In order to attend please register by **January 29, 2024**
with katharina.mewes@uni-hamburg.de

Information and Abstracts

[https://www.romanislam.uni-hamburg.de/events-
news/workshops/military-foundations.html](https://www.romanislam.uni-hamburg.de/events-news/workshops/military-foundations.html)



The workshop wants to challenge the ongoing discourse on the origins of the ‘Islamic’ city. It looks at military settlements and the presence of garrisons as a driving force of colonialization as well as the proliferation of Islamic civilization. Using a comparative approach to Empire Studies, the workshop aims at looking at cases of military city foundations in empires that were likewise founded by conquering military elites promoting at the same time a salvation religion, i.e., the Roman and Hispanic empires.

Often underrated— although frequently noted— is the role of the military in the increasing urbanization of the early Islamic Empire. The foundation of cities as military hubs (sg. *miṣr*), encampments (sg. *mu‘askar*), or garrison cities (sg. *madīna*, *ḥiṣn*, *ribāṭ*) may be taken into account as a driving force of urbanization.

Comparatively, the foundation of cities in foreign lands is a feature of imperial expansion. Such cities serve as agents of the empire’s civilization, culture, and its (salvation) religion. While other urban foundations may be in opposition to the empire, even these would largely do so on political and religious terms created by that empire. Disregarding traditional chronologies, and looking from a phenomenological point of view, three empires of western Eurasian origins offer themselves for comparison: the Roman Empire, and the Hispanic Empire in the Americas.

The workshop wants to explore in a comparative mode how military structures affected imperial urban foundations and the cultures of empires.



Military Foundations, *ribāṭs*, and Urbanization

Workshop

Universität Hamburg
February 1–2, 2024



Gormaz (Ghurmāj), caliphal castle, 966
Courtesy J. F. Esteban Barahona

**RomanIslam – Center for Comparative
Empire and Transcultural Studies
(Early Islam)**



Thursday, February 1, 2024

AS, Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1, Hamburg

10:00 Registration

10:15 **Stefan Heidemann, Kurt Franz**
(RomanIslam Center, Universität Hamburg)
Introduction and Welcome

10:45 **Stefan Heidemann**
(RomanIslam Center, Universität Hamburg)
Military Foundations in the Early Islamic Empire
in Comparison: A Case Study of al-Raqqa

11:30 **Javier Francisco**
(Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg)
An Empire of Municipalities: The Military
Character of Spanish-American Settlements

12:15 Lunch Break

14:30 **Joan Negre**
(Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica,
Tarragona)
Coastal Military Foundations and the Practice
of *ribāṭ* beyond the City: Defense and
Islamization in the Far-flung Shores of Sharq
al-Andalus



La Habana, main Spanish fortification in the Americas,
17th c. · Atlas Beudeker, courtesy Wikimedia

15:15 Coffee Break

15:45 **Peter Fibiger Bang** · *online*
(University of Copenhagen)
Empire, Garrison Cities and the
Provincialization of Power

16:30 **Werner Schwartz**
(Georg-August-Universität Göttingen)
The Rustamid Imamate: Military History and
Building Activities

17:15 **Stefan Heidemann, Kurt Franz**
(RomanIslam Center, Universität Hamburg)
Roundtable Discussion: Parameters of
Comparison

19:30 Dinner



al-Raqqa (al-Rāfiqa), city wall, 8th c.
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Friday, February 2, 2024

AS, Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1, Hamburg

9:00 **Stefan Heidemann, Kurt Franz**
(RomanIslam Center, Universität Hamburg)
Introduction to Day 2

9:30 **Michaela Konrad**
(Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg)
Aspects of the Impact of Roman Army
Garrisons in the Frontier Provinces of the
Roman Empire

10:15 **Abdelkerim Chebli**
(Université de Jendouba)
Le système de fortification en Ifrīqiya: *ribāṭ* et
murābiṭūn en haut Moyen Âge

11:00 Coffee Break

11:30 **Mehdy Shaddel**
(Aga Khan University, London)
The End of the *miṣr* and the Birth of the
Classical Islamic City: From the Coming of the
Marwānids to the Foundation of Baghdad

12:15 **Stefan Heidemann, Kurt Franz**
(RomanIslam Center, Universität Hamburg)
Roundtable Discussion: Parameters of
Comparison

13:00 End of Workshop

13:30 Lunch



Regensburg, remains of the Porta Pretoria,
2nd c. · Courtesy Wikimedia