



# New Perspectives on Romanization and Islamication

Sep. 29 – Oct 1, 2021



Center for Comparative Empire and Transcultural Studies



## New Perspectives on Romanization and Islamication

Romanization and Islamication, meaning the “Roman way of life” and Islamic culture, are two processes that continue to shape society today: RomanIslam plans to investigate the processes of cultural assimilation in the western Mediterranean, specifically on the Iberian Peninsula and in North Africa. These regions are ideal for comparative research on empires because structurally speaking, they had comparable economic significance for the Roman and Islamic Empires respectively as well as many other features in common.

Prior to assimilation there with two distinct cultures, the Celtiberian and the Berber, that were only superficially influenced by Greek culture. The Roman and Islamic Empires introduced to these an Eastern Imperial or Middle Eastern religion of salvation (Christianity and Islam respectively) in the guise of state religion. This historical situation in the first millennium allows researchers to develop new models and theories in the field of transcultural studies and comparative empire studies

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## Wednesday Sep. 29, 2021

Warburghaus, Heilwigstraße 116, 20249 Hamburg

17.30 h      **Sabine Panzram – Stefan Heidemann** (Universität Hamburg)

*Welcome and Introduction*

**Silke Segler-Meißner**

Dean of the Faculty of Humanities (Universität Hamburg)

**Nader Bousrih**

Generalconsul of Tunisia in Hamburg

**Pedro Villena Pérez**

Generalconsul of Spain in Hamburg

**Sebastian Schmidt-Hofner**

(Universität Tübingen)

*Images of Good Government and the Ideology of the Late Roman Aristocracy of Service*

**Abigail Balbale**

(New York University) online

*Al-Andalus 8th/21st c.: The Islamic Conquest in Contemporary Debate*

20.00 h      Reception

## Thursday Sep. 30, 2021

Warburghaus, Heilwigstraße 116, 20249 Hamburg

9.30 h            **Sabine Panzram – Stefan Heidemann** (Universität Hamburg)

*Welcome and Introduction*

### Iberian Peninsula

9.45 h            **Alberto León Muñoz & Garriguet Mata** (Universidad de Córdoba)

*Archaeological Analysis of 1500 Years of History in the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba and its Urban Environment. First Results of the Excavation in the Patio de los Naranjos*

10.15 h           **Volker Menze** (Central European University Vienna)

*The Ariminian-Visigothic Church in Sixth-Century Spain: The Quest for an Ecclesiology*

10.45 h           **Damián Fernández** (Northern Illinois University – Freie Universität Berlin)

*Inheritance Law, Lineage, and Class Identity in the Visigothic Kingdom*

11.15 h           Coffee Break

11.45 h           **Javier Arce** (Université de Lille)

*Villae and the Society of Late Roman Spain (4th-6th Centuries)*

12.15 h      **Lauro Olmo Enciso** (Universidad de Alcalá)  
*From Visigoths to Arabs: Landscape and Transculturation  
in Central Iberia (6th-9th Centuries)*

### North Africa

12.45 h      **Darío Bernal Casasola** (Universidad de Cádiz) online  
*Late Roman Economy & Trade in Both Sides of the Strait of  
Gibraltar: Trends & Challenges*

13.30 h      Lunch Break

15.30 h      **Sabine Lefebvre** (Université de Bourgogne)  
*The Epigraphy of the Provinces of North Africa:  
An Abundance of Documentary and Textual Richness*

16.00 h      **Philipp von Rummel** (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut  
Berlin)  
*Africa and the Long Late Antiquity*

16.30 h      **Chokri Touihri** (Institut National du Patrimoine Tunis)  
*The Africa – Ifriqiya Transition: Some Economic Effects of  
the Arab Conquest through Ceramic Studies*

17.00 h      Coffee Break

17.30 h      **Advisory Board Meeting**

**Friday Oct. 1, 2021**

Warburghaus, Heilwigstraße 116, 20249 Hamburg

**Transcultural and Comparative Empire Studies**

9.30 h           **Martin Pitts** (University of Exeter) online  
*Romanization 2.0: Perspectives, Possibilities, and Practicalities*

10.00 h          **Peter Bang** (University of Copenhagen)  
*Empire and Culture – Islamication, Romanization and Comparative World History*

**Conflicting Narratives - The Imperial Perspective**

10.30 h          **Alejandro García-Sanjuán** (Universidad de Huelva)  
*The Origins of al-Andalus; the Issue of the Sources*

11.00 h          Coffee Break

**Emergence of Islamic Scholarship**

11.30 h          **Felix Arnold** (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Madrid)  
*The Contribution of Architectural History to the Study of Empires: Problems and Potentials*

12.00 h          **Corisande Fenwick** (University College London) online  
*Archaeology and Early Islamic North Africa: New Answers to Old Questions*

12.30 h          Lunch

## Manuscripts and Documents

- 14.30 h      **Jonathan Brockopp** (Penn State University / CSMC Hamburg)  
*An Empire of Books*
- 15.00 h      **Rocio Daga-Portillo** (Ludwig Maximilians Universität München)  
*„Mestizage“ of Legal Culture. Documents from the Cathedral of Toledo ( 11th.-14th. Century)*
- 15.30 h      Coffee Break

## Material Culture

- 16.00 h      **Maribel Fierro** (The Spanish National Research Council Madrid)  
*The Emergence of the Group of Religious Scholars in al-Andalus*
- 16.30 h      **Camilla Adang** (Tel Aviv University) online  
*The Early Maghribi Tradition: Ifriqiya as a Case-Study*
- 17.00 h      **Roundtable Discussion / Final remarks**





## Abstracts

**Prof. Dr. Sebastian Schmidt-Hofner** (Universität Tübingen)

### **Images of Good Government and the Ideology of the Late Roman Aristocracy of Service**

The contribution outlines selected aspects of the corporate identity and ideology of the Roman aristocracy of service that emerged in the fourth century and in the course of the fifth acquired political self-confidence and power. By focusing on this sub-imperial level of late Roman government and privileging non-institutional aspects, the paper opens a window onto a rich but understudied area of the social and cultural history of the later Roman empire and offers a new perspective on late Roman statehood.

**Prof. Dr. Abigail Balbale** (New York University)

### **Al-Andalus 8th/21st c.: The Islamic Conquest in Contemporary Debate**

The second decade of the twenty-first century witnessed an intense and at times vitriolic debate among scholars in Spain over the historical veracity of accounts of the Islamic conquest of al-Andalus in the eighth century. At the core of this debate is the question of what counts as historical fact, and how the scholar should engage with chronicles written after the events they purport to describe. The books and articles that form the debate draw in multiple kinds of sources, including archaeological and numismatic evidence alongside revisionist hypotheses, turning a disagreement over how to describe the conquest into a forum on historical approaches. The debate is also, fundamentally, about the nature of al-Andalus in relation to the broader Islamic world and to modern Spain, and about the relationship among monotheistic traditions in Late Antiquity. As a North American scholar uninvolved with these arguments, I will provide an overview of the state of the question, and offer some thoughts about the possibilities of historical research rooted in both written and material sources.

**Prof. Dr. Alberto León Muñoz & Prof. Dr. Garriguet Mata** (Universidad de Córdoba)

**Archaeological Analysis of 1500 Years of History in the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba and its Urban Environment. First Results of the Excavation in the Patio de los Naranjos**

In our speech we present the research project “From Iulius Caesar to the Catholic Monarchs. Archaeological Analysis of 1500 Years of History in the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba and its Urban Environment”, recently granted by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation. We also present a preview of the results of the excavation that has been carried out since September 2020 in the Patio de los Naranjos of the aforementioned building. Our project, which has an expected duration of four years, aims to analyze, from a diachronic and archaeological perspective, the urban planning and architecture of one of the nerve centers of Córdoba –due to concentrating spaces of civil and religious power in the city- between the 1st century BC and the Christian late medieval period; placing special emphasis on the debate about the location and development in this area of the late antique episcopal complex, which is currently being excavated. Such excavation supposes, in practice, the continuation of the work carried out by the architect-conservator Félix Hernández in the Patio de los Naranjos during the 20th century. For the development of the mentioned project, there is a large team of specialists, as well as the close collaboration of the Cathedral Council of Córdoba, the Archaeological Museum and the Municipal Urban Planning Office of Córdoba

**Prof. Dr. Volker Menze** (Central European University Vienna)

## **The Ariminian-Visigothic Church in Sixth-Century Spain: The Quest for an Ecclesiology**

Two Churches existed in the Visigothic kingdom during the sixth century: the Nicene (“Catholic”) Church and the Ariminian-Visigothic (“Arian”) Church, and scholars often at least implicitly assume that the latter had the same organizational structure and infrastructure as the existing Nicene Church. In my talk I will show that the Ariminian-Visigothic Church and its self-understanding was quite different from Nicene Christianity – at least until 580. It was not a territorial Church with sees that were continuously occupied by bishops. It was rather the religious and spiritual arm of the *gens Visigotorum* – a royal “church” with the majority of ecclesiastical manpower concentrated at the king’s court in Toledo. Only after 580 King Leovigild (568-586) tried to build up a competitive Ariminian Church with an ecclesiastical infrastructure and a comprehensive ecclesiastical hierarchy – a state-wide, multi-ethnic and territorial Church with an agenda to attract converts. The new Church was modelled on the Nicene Church with an Eusebian-like ecclesiology, centered on the Visigothic king as its patron. However, Leovigild’s attempt was short-lived and gave way for the *gens Visigotorum*’s conversion and the religious unity of the Visigothic kingdom under Nicene auspices after 589.

**Prof. Dr. Damián Fernández** (Northern Illinois University – Freie Universität Berlin)

### **Inheritance Law, Lineage, and Class Identity in the Visigothic Kingdom**

This paper examines the interactions between class identity and law in the Visigothic kingdom. My analysis of King Chindaswinth's (r. 642-653) norms on testate inheritance indicates that inheritance practices were intertwined with notions of class identity that developed in the aftermath of empire. Chindaswinth's legislation on testate inheritance protected the transmission of family patrimony through descent. While Chindaswinth is often presented as a king hostile to the aristocracy, his legislation shows that state policy relied on the prevailing forms of aristocratic identity. Indeed, his laws aimed at reproducing the state's tributary capacity without affecting, and indeed while reinforcing, the social self-definition of the landowning class. By looking at ideas on freedom and ethnicity prevailing among the sociopolitical elites, this paper will argue that class identity revolved around membership in wealthy freeborn lineages. Chindaswinth's law on testate inheritance therefore reproduced the state's fiscal capacity within the social parameters (and not against the interests) of the landowning class.

**Prof. Dr. Javier Arce** (Université de Lille)

### **Villae and the Society of Late Roman Spain (4th-6th Centuries)**

Many ancient sources mention women as owners of great estates and villae in Hispania in Late Antiquity - from the IVth to the VIth centuries. However, we always talk of *possessores* and men as proprietors in the rural places of the Peninsula. It is time to begin to propose the role of women in the property of land. We can mention many names -Pompeia, Melania, the Theudis' wife, the senator's wife in Emerita mentioned in the *VPE*, and so on. Sometimes the iconography of the mosaic decoration of some *villae* reflect, perhaps, the ownership of a *villa* -that is the case of Pedrosa or Noheda, etc.

Another question about the mosaics is to know what was the degree of understanding of the representations, if the owners were able to understand the significance of their content.

In a series of case studies, we present the reflection of the society in their *villae* during the period, their culture and their way of life.

New Perspectives on Romanization and Islamication

**Prof. Dr. Lauro Olmo Enciso** (Universidad de Alcalá)

**From Visigoths to Arabs: Landscape and Transculturation in Central Iberia (6th-9th Centuries)**

*Coming Soon*

**Prof.Dr. Darío Bernal Casasola** (Universidad de Cádiz)

## **Late Roman Economy & Trade in Both Sides of the Strait of Gibraltar: Trends & Challenges**

The so-called “Circle of the Strait” is a periphrasis we use normally to define a geo-historical region gathering both sides of the Straits of Gibraltar in Antiquity. Same people, similar ways of life, converging economies and so on.

In this paper we will discuss some of the main historical topics dealing with this region in Late Antiquity, using archaeological information from on-going projects in some of the main cities and archaeological sites from both shores: mainly from *Septem* (modern Ceuta), one of the most important cities in *Tingitana* from the III c. AD onwards, especially active in Vandal and Byzantine times (V – VII c. AD); *Tamuda* a military camp of the tingitanian border abandoned in the second quarter of the V c. AD; *Gades*, one of the major Mediterranean harbors in Early Imperial times turned into a small town from the late II c. AD; a similar situation we also find at *Baelo Claudia*, both of them in the coasts of *Baetica*; and *Traducta* (modern Algeciras), whose fish-salting plants were active till the first half of the VI c. AD, before the conquest of the area by the troops of Justinian. Are the first archaeological abandonments we notice in our stratigraphies in Late Antoninian times effects of a general crisis? Why did the main economic productive areas focus to international trade change from *Gades* to *Malaca* and *Onoba* regions in the IV & V c. AD? Why don't we notice (normally) effects of the Vandal crossing of the Strait in the second quarter of the V c. AD? Why did the coastal *cetariae* work actively in the V and VI c. AD? What was the economic impact of the Byzantine presence in the area from 533/550 till the late VII c. AD? These questions will be discussed, based on archaeological evidence.



**Prof. Dr. Sabine Lefebvre** (Université de Bourgogne)

## **The Epigraphy of the Provinces of North Africa: An Abundance of Documentary and Textual Richness**

Conquise en plusieurs vagues, depuis 146 a.C. et la 3<sup>e</sup> guerre punique pour la Proconsulaire jusqu'en 41 p.C. avec la Maurétanie, l'Afrique du Nord présente un champ d'investigation particulièrement riche pour les épigraphistes : la très grande majorité des villes romaines n'a pas été recouverte par des constructions postérieures ni au Moyen-Âge ni plus tard, ce qui a permis la non destruction par l'homme de la documentation. Les inscriptions latines mentionnées pour certaines très tôt dans les écrits des voyageurs ou des militaires arrivés dans le cadre de la colonisation, sont donc nombreuses à avoir été découvertes, pour beaucoup *in situ*, dans les espaces publics des cités, dans les nécropoles, aux marges des territoires civiques ... Cette richesse a été remarquée par des savants comme H.-G. Pflaum qui ont contribué à une meilleure connaissance des inscriptions. C'est aussi sur la très longue durée que les textes s'échelonnent proposant une richesse importante pour les textes chrétiens. Ce sont tous les aspects de la vie de l'empire qui sont présents : l'épigraphie africaine permet ainsi de traiter aussi bien de la vie politique (Septime Sévère issu de Lepcis Magna) et militaire (discours d'Hadrien à Lambaesis) de l'empire, que de l'organisation des cités avec la mention de promotions (droit latin mineur et majeur à Gigthis). La vie religieuse est aussi très bien représentée tout comme la vie économique avec le tarif de Zarai, des lois agraires ou la mention des domaines impériaux. S'il existe de nombreux *corpora* souvent anciens, permettant la recherche, on peut regretter que le nombre d'actualisation ou les publications de nouveaux textes ne soient pas plus nombreuses, même s'il existe divers projets rendant l'accès aux inscriptions africaines plus facile.

**Dr. Philipp von Rummel** (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Berlin)

### **Africa and the Long Late Antiquity**

Both key concepts of the RomanIslam Centre - Romanisation and Islamication - can be excellently examined in North Africa. The aspect of increasing Roman influence from the second century BC onwards has been an intensive field of research in North Africa for a long time, not least under the influence of colonialism and its aftermath. If this early period still holds much debate, this paper focuses on the period commonly referred to as the "long late antiquity". The second half of the first millennium was marked by a series of conquests, migrations and regime changes which saw the region transform from one of the wealthiest provinces of the Roman empire to a frontier-region of the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphate in the late 7th and 8th century. Using examples of recent joint INP/DAI-excavations in Tunisia, it will be shown where, from an archaeological point of view, particular challenges exist for the investigation of processes of cultural assimilation, especially after the Muslim conquest of North Africa. The paper underlines the need for new systematic, interdisciplinary and multi-sited approaches using sites and assemblages of a sufficient high resolution. The paper will also promote an approach that allows long-term observations independent of established academic disciplines as a basis for comparative approaches.

**Dr. Chokri Touihri** (Institut National du Patrimoine Tunis)

### **The Africa – Ifriqiya Transition: Some Economic Effects of the Arab Conquest through Ceramic Studies**

The administration of the Arab-Muslim conquest in north Africa was centralized and had to rely, at the beginning, on Byzantine methods and personnel, (This fact is fully attested in Egypt). The "lingua franca" of the new sovereignty was Latin for the collection of taxes and the first coinage in the province of Ifriqiya. It is not excluded in this connection, that certain tax management continued to operate following the occupation of the fortified cities. The establishment of a new system of exploitation, which manifested itself in the restructuring of cultivable lands and in the substitution, by the Romans and Byzantine power, of a market economy for a subsistence economy.

The preliminary studies of some ceramic of new excavations in the north west of Tunisia, allow us to establish some relevant remarks about the economic consequences of the Arab-Muslim conquest of north Africa.

**Dr. Martin Pitts** (University of Exeter)

## **Romanisation 2.0: Perspectives, Possibilities, and Practicalities**

The term 'Romanisation 2.0' recently arose from discussions on the application of globalization ideas to the study of Roman cultural dynamics. This presentation will briefly outline the case for Romanisation 2.0 and the theoretical and methodological challenges of putting it into practice. Romanisation 2.0 is a perspective that arguably offers the greatest potential for the study of material and visual culture, providing a framework going beyond methodological nationalism, de-centering Rome, and fostering new interpretations by examining the impacts of objects-in-motion in a connected empire (and beyond). Rather than providing a new master narrative in Roman studies, this should be seen as an alternative perspective to more established ways of conceptualizing Roman imperialism. In this way, Romanisation 2.0 is not an interpretative lens that can be simply 'applied' to a given historical period or extant body of data. Taking ideas of globalization seriously requires us to re-think some assumptions and pay careful attention to questions of analytical scale (moving between micro and macro), and drawing upon comparable data from wide areas. The broader perspective has particular value in shedding new light on the transformative role of connectivity in important transitional periods, which will be illuminated with some brief applied examples.

**Peter Bang** (University of Copenhagen)

## **Empire and Culture – Islamication, Romanization and Comparative World History**

Over the recent generation of scholarship, the polyethnic and multicultural character of the grand universal empires of Afro-Eurasian history has moved increasingly to the forefront of studies. Yet, where does that leave older concepts such as Romanization, Islamication, Ottomanization or Sinification coined to capture the processes of cultural integration taking place across these empires? A form of globalization might be one way to approach imperial cultures. But if so, the modern theoretical concept must be modified by a turn to comparison to produce more historically sensitive models. This paper analyses the cultural integration of pre-colonial empire as shaped by two intersecting forces. 1. The game of elite emulation invited by ruling courts. 2. The gradual fragmentation and provincialization of power that since Ibn Khaldun has been connected with the transformation of a conquest society to imperial rule. However, governmental power was not simply dissolved in the reservoir of provincial subjects. If a successful transition was achieved, local elites would, sometimes fast, other times more gradually, take over the empire. In this perspective, Romanization and Islamication become a result of the strategies of local elites to claim status and position within the cosmopolitan world order of empire.

**Alejandro García-Sanjuán** (Universidad de Huelva)

### **The Origins of al-Andalus; the Issue of the Sources**

The origin of al-Andalus is a hotly contested scholarly topic about which very different and often contradicting versions had been raised. To a certain extent, this variety of approaches is the consequence of the clearly insufficient amount of contemporary sources available. On the other hand, however, it is not less true that, in many cases, the sources had been superficially approached and sometimes even dismissed almost beforehand. Even though it could hardly be described as a neatly planned military operation, taken together, the available literary and the archaeological record provide a clear picture of the origins of al-Andalus as the result of a military conquest carried out by forces acting at the service of the Umayyad Caliphate of Damascus.

**Felix Arnold** (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Madrid)

## **The Contribution of Architectural History to the Study of Empires: Problems and Potentials**

What does the architecture of palaces tell us about their patrons? Can building archaeology be a source apart from textual evidence? In a famous quote, Winston Churchill remarked that “*We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us.*” Buildings reveal not only something about the intentions of the patrons, but also on how buildings have shaped societies. Since 2017 the German Archaeological Institute and the Conjunto Arqueológico de Madinat al-Zahra are investigating the entrance courtyard to the caliphal palace at Madinat al-Zahra (Córdoba, Spain). Excavations have revealed a complex history of the site. Within a short period, the palace façade was redesigned repeatedly, from a garden wall (c. 329 AH/940-41 CE), to a highly fortified compound, to an open entrance portico (c. 342 AH/953-54 CE), to a point of control. The building phases not only mirror the rise and evolution of the short-lived caliphate of the Umayyads at Córdoba. The changes attest to a vigorous debate about the role of the caliph in society and the way this role is to be expressed, providing information beyond the data preserved in contemporary textual sources. The design of the architecture indicates a progressive distancing of the caliph from the public, and thus highlights one of the factors that lead to the subsequent crisis of the caliphate. The example of Madinat al-Zahra shows how the investigation of architecture can provide new evidence for the study of empires and their structure.

**Corisande Fenwick** (University College London) online

### **Archaeology and Early Islamic North Africa: New Answers to Old Questions**

For much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Islamic period was the preserve of historians and art historians, with only a handful of small-scale excavations conducted at the major palatial-cities and monuments in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. The last three decades have seen a significant rise in the number of projects and amount of data available and a new interest in revisiting old questions and models for the Islamic period. This paper will first chart a brief history of Islamic archaeology in North Africa from the earliest excavations at the Qal'a of Beni Hammad in the 1890s to the present day, highlighting exciting recent developments and enduring challenges. It will then focus on one of the most charged debates in the region – the impact of Muslim rule and the spread of Islam on daily life – and show how the latest archaeological research challenges traditional understandings of this process.



**Jonathan Brockopp** (Penn State University / CSMC Hamburg)

## **An Empire of Books: Muslim scholarly power in the early Islamicate Mediterranean**

In this paper, I survey the rise of a writerly culture in the Islamicate world of the eighth and ninth centuries CE, when Arabic became established as a language of scholarly authority, not only among Muslims. Muslim histories suggest that scholars (the ‘*ulamā*’) were active from the earliest period, yet there is little evidence to support this claim. Certainly, we have no trace of madrasas or teaching mosques from the first two centuries of the *hijra*. Others have suggested that the ‘*ulamā*’ arose from the state bureaucracy, but my research, based on an analysis of the material evidence from this period, suggests a third option, that private religious scholars formed communities that, by the year 800, began to produce books.

By “books” I mean unified literary works whose verbatim transmission is made possible by a community of scholars. This argument rests on evidence from the oldest intact collection of Arabic manuscripts, currently located in Kairouan, Tunisia. This collection contains twenty-three of thirty Islamic literary manuscripts (excluding Qur’ans) known to have been written before the year AH 300 (913 CE). The treasures of this collection offer extraordinary evidence of book transmission by a community of scholars, one that had connections to all quarters of the Islamicate world. Alongside the transitory empires of caliphs and amirs, an empire of books arose to challenge their claims to power.

**Rocio Daga-Portillo** (Ludwig Maximilians Universität München)

**„Mestizaje“ of Legal Culture. Documents from the Cathedral of Toledo (11th.-14th. Century)**

The collection of legal documents of the Cathedral of Toledo, Archivo Histórico Nacional de Madrid, a collection of 1175 documents (1083-1391) witnesses the preservation of the Arabic language and legal culture for about 250 years after the conquest of Toledo(1085). Arabic language and legal culture continued under the Castilian administration after the population of Toledo had become subject to Christian “law,” called Sunnat an-Naṣārā.

The collection of the Cathedral of Toledo, the biggest Arabic collection of documents preserved in Spain, represent the documentary tradition following the path of Ibn al-‘Aṭṭār of Córdoba (10th.century) and Ibn al-Mugīṭ of Toledo (11th.century). On the other hand, discontinuity is represented by a number of diplomatic features and the introduction of Christian laws.

This „mestizaje“ or fusion of legal cultures will be analyzed through a contract of marriage and other examples, posing the question of the role of legal custom in Toledo society.

**Maribel Fierro** (The Spanish National Research Council Madrid)

### **The Emergence of the Group of Religious Scholars in al-Andalus**

In my paper I will start with a summary of the present state of our knowledge regarding the emergence of 'ulamā' in al-Andalus (2nd/8th-3rd/9th centuries), a topic to which a number of scholars have paid attention, focusing on those areas that still need further study. Then I will concentrate on the intellectual production from the period considered that has reached us in order to analyze what we can learn through such preserved works regarding those who were responsible for it, also conducting an enquiry into how and why such books have been preserved and the way in which such reasons relate to dynamics put in place by the emergent body of 'ulamā'.

**Camilla Adang** (Tel Aviv University) online

### **The Early Maghribī Biographical Tradition: Ifrīqiya as a Case-Study**

Biographical dictionaries or compendia constitute one of the most developed and important genres of Arabic literature and are an indispensable tool for analyzing any aspect of Islamic history, whether religious, intellectual, cultural, political, social or economic. Among the earliest such works there are two that document episodes from the lives of scholars in Ifrīqiya, and in particular Qayrawān, namely Kitāb Ṭabaqāt ‘ulamā’ Ifrīqiya, by Abū l-‘Arab Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Tamīmī (d. 333/945) and ‘Ulamā’ Ifrīqiya by Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ḥārith al-Khushanī (d. 361/971). Their information is supplemented by later compilations by Abū Bakr ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Mālikī (d. in or after 474/1081), Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ b. Mūsā (d. 544/1149) and Abū Zayd ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dabbāgh (d. 696/1296), the latter's work having been critically revised by Abū l-Faḍl b. ‘Īsā al-Nājī (d. 839/1487). The works provide information on topics such as the competition between the Mālikī and Ḥanafī schools in Aghlabid Ifrīqiya, rivalries between scholars, religious disputations, book production and consumption, developments in Islamic law and theology, relations between rulers and ruled, and the rise of the Fāṭimids. As an illustration of what these texts tell us about what was in many ways a period of transition, and how they tell it, I shall present the case of Abū Ja‘far Aḥmad b. Mu‘tib b. Abī l-Azhar (d. 277/890).

## Contact

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More: [www.romanislam.uni-hamburg.de](http://www.romanislam.uni-hamburg.de)



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