



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

List of Participants and Paper Topics
Three-Day International Conference, Florence, Italy
Thursday, July 16 to Saturday, July 18, 2009

Conference Location:

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz / Max-Planck-Institut
Via Giuseppe Giusti 44
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Conference Description:

The research project “Crossing Boundaries, Creating Images: In Search of the Prophet Muhammad in Literary and Visual Traditions,” which is supported by the Max-Planck-Institute and run at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz (2007-2012) by Professor Avinoam Shalem, has organized a three-day conference that aims to bring together approximately thirty distinguished scholars whose work explores the varied ways in which the Prophet Muhammad has been constructed and imagined through both European eyes and within Islamic traditions. Scholars will present twenty-minute papers, preferably in English, at the conference; papers may be given in other languages as well, including French, German, Spanish, and Italian.

Members of the Research Group:

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Brief Biography:

Suzanne Akbari's work centers on the interrelation of medieval literature and intellectual history, especially history of science, ethnography, and encyclopedism. She has published *Seeing Through the Veil: Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory* (Toronto, 2004), *Marco Polo and the Encounter of East and West* (Toronto, 2008), and *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450* (Cornell, 2009). She also has authored articles on themes related to our upcoming conference, namely: "The Rhetoric of Antichrist in Western Lives of Muhammad," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 8/3 (1997), 297-307; and "Imagining Islam: The Role of Images in Medieval Depictions of Muslims," *Scripta Mediterranea* 19-20 (1998-9), 9-27.

Title and Theme of Presentation:

"Ambivalence and Assimilation: Muhammad in the *Divine Comedy*"

This paper will discuss Dante's depiction of Muhammad in *Inferno* 28, situating this depiction within three larger contexts: first, the confluence of the apparently dissimilar modes of representing Islam, "fanciful" and "realistic"; second, the geography of Islam in the *Commedia*, where both negatively (in the *Inferno*) and positively (in the *Paradiso*), Islamic structures – both physical and epistemological – are used to map out the terrain of the afterworld; and, third, the "ambivalence" that Dante is sometimes said to display toward Islam.

In particular, this study will argue that Dante's position is not so much one of ambivalence as of assimilation, where that which is abject – in this case, Muhammad's experience of the divine as narrated in the Islamic *mi'raj* accounts – is appropriated in order to serve as the template for the Christian experience of God. Dante uses the figure of Muhammad both descriptively, in *Inferno* 28, and narratively, in the *mi'raj* adaptation in the *Paradiso*, first rendering Islam abject in order to cast it out from Christian self-definitions of the community, and then reintegrating it in order to narrate the encounter of the Christian subject with the divine presence.

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Brief Biography:

David Bjelajac teaches and publishes in the field of American art. His research primarily focuses upon the visual culture of American religion, Freemasonry, science and craft traditions of art, particularly the alchemy of painting. His publications include: *American Art: A Cultural History*, revised and expanded second edition (Prentice Hall, 2005); *Washington Allston, Secret Societies, and the Alchemy of Anglo-American Painting* (Cambridge University Press, 1997); “Thomas Cole’s *Oxbow* and the American Zion Divided,” *American Art* 20 (Spring, 2006): 60-83; and “William Sidney Mount and the Hermetic Tradition in American Art,” in *The Visual Culture of American Religions*, eds. Sally Promey and David Morgan (University of California Press, 2001).

Title and Theme of Presentation:

“Masonic Fraternalism and Muhammad Among the Lawgivers in Adolph Weinman’s Sculpture Frieze for the United States Supreme Court (1931-1935)”

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the modern social fraternity of Freemasonry developed higher-degree rituals inspired by anti-Islamic, crusading orders of knighthood. Yet conflicted American Freemasons, appreciative of Arabic contributions to science and mathematics, were also eager to transcend religious, sectarian violence. Many promoted a Deist, monotheistic notion of God as the “Great Architect,” Creator or lawgiver of the universe. Liberal Protestant Freemasons, especially Unitarians, further envisioned a religiously inclusive moral brotherhood built upon shared principles progressively shaped through successive civilizations.

Stemming from this Masonic, Enlightenment tradition, a representation of the Prophet Muhammad appears in a sculpture frieze of world “Lawgivers” for the Courtroom of the United States Supreme Court building dedicated in 1935. Sculptor Adolph Weinman (1870-1952) created four friezes of life-size historical and allegorical figures. His fraternal imagery expressed the Masonic internationalism and imperial ambition of Chief Justice, and former United States president, William Howard Taft (1857-1930).

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Brief Biography:

Hartmut Bobzin has been a Professor of Islamic and Semitic Studies at Erlangen since 1992 and, since 2003, a member of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences. His fields of research include Qur'anic studies, the history of Qur'an translations (especially in the Latin tradition), the rise of Islamic studies in Europe during the Age of Reformation, and the work of Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866). His publications include: *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation* (1st ed., 1995; 2nd ed. 2008); *Der Koran in der Übersetzung von Friedrich Rückert* (1st ed., 1995; 4th ed., 2001); *Der Koran: Eine Einführung* (1999); *Mohammed* (2000; published in numerous other languages); *KoranLeseBuch* (2005; 2nd ed., 2008); and the edited catalogue *Glaubensbuch und Weltliteratur: Koranübersetzungen in Deutschland von der Reformationszeit bis heute* (2007).

Title and Theme of Presentation:

"Der 'falsche Prophet' im Zeitalter der Reformation" ("The False Prophet' in the Age of Reformation")

Since the emerging of Islam in the 7th century A.D. the image of its 'founder' Muhammad on the Christian side has been strongly dominated by the conception of "the false prophet." It was developed by John of Damaskus (d. ca. 750) in his *Liber de Haeresibus*, referring to certain figures of the first centuries Church history, including Montanus of Phrygia (2nd c.) and 'heretics' like Sabellius and Arius. In the image of Muhammad as 'false prophet' formed by Christian polemics a certain episode from *Sura* 33 of the Qur'an was of crucial importance. It is said in this *Sura* that Muhammad married the wife of his adopted son Zaid ibn Thabit. This information was interpreted by Christian polemicists as adultery and, accordingly, as a clear proof of the wicked character of Muhammad. This episode was early known in the Western world and supported the image of Muhammad as a lecher. During the age of the Reformation, new prophetic movements arose, especially inside the left-wing spheres of the Reformation. In order to fight against these movements and its leading figures, Catholics as well as Lutherans harnessed the image of Muhammad as the archetypal "false prophet" for intra-Christian religious polemics.

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Brief Biography:

Thomas E. Burman is a scholar of medieval Christian-Muslim relations in the western Mediterranean, especially in their intellectual and religious dimensions. He is author of *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs, c. 1050-1200* (Leiden, 1994), and *Reading the Qur'an in Latin Christendom, 1140-1560* (Philadelphia, 2007).

Title and Theme of Presentation:

"A European Author Portrait of Muhammad and Medieval Latin Traditions of Qur'an Reading"

The first page of an Italian manuscript (Paris, BnF lat. 3670), dated 1515, of Robert of Ketton's Latin Qur'an translation contains an author portrait of Muhammad wearing a turban and holding a book— doubtless the Qur'an itself. In this paper, Thomas Burman will discuss the intriguing ambivalences that this portrait embodies: on the one hand, Muhammad is portrayed without the distorted features so common to European images of Muslims, and as an authoritative author of an important book, much as one would find the image of Plato or Boethius or Avicenna at the beginning of a contemporary humanist manuscript of their works. However, on the other hand, by suggesting that Muhammad is the author of the Qur'an, this portrait implicitly advances one of the key arguments of medieval Christian polemicists against Islam: namely, that the Qur'an is not a divinely revealed text, but the human work of a pseudo-prophet. Such ambivalences, as found in this image, are in fact typical of Latin-Christian interactions with the Qur'an and Islam generally.

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Brief Biography:

Pierre Centlivres is an anthropologist with field experience in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Europe. His research interests include questions of identity, citizenship, belonging, refugees, diasporas, and popular imagery in Islam. His publications most relevant for the conference include *Imageries Populaires en Islam*, with Micheline Centlivres-Demont (Geneva: Georg, 1997), and "Une étrange rencontre. La photographie orientaliste de Lehnert et Landrock et l'image iranienne du prophète Mahomet," *Etudes photographiques* 17 (November 2005), 4-15.

Title and Theme of Presentation:

“La représentation du Prophète dans l’imagerie populaire iranienne contemporaine” (“The Depiction of the Prophet in Contemporary Iranian Popular Imagery”)

At the end of the 1990s, a portrait of the Prophet Muhammad unveiled, in his early years, could be bought from the image vendors in the streets of Tehran and other Iranian cities. The posters, about 50 x 35 cm, in several variants, are now drawn from sale. The Prophet, portrayed as a young man with a beautiful face, seems at first sight to be borrowed from a painting by an Italian mannerist. According to a note on one of the variants, the original painting is said to be located in a museum in “Rum.”

In reality, this portrait is drawn from a postcard made after a photograph taken in Tunis, before the First World War, by Rudolf Lehnert (1878-1948). It was entitled “Mohamed” by the artist and it belonged to a photographic set of exotic types prepared for amateurs. These Tunisian postcards of Lehnert and his associate Landrock were very popular among the French troops in North Africa and the Levant. The photograph is still offered for sale in the tourist shops of Egypt, where it includes the identification “Young nomad from Upper Egypt.”

This paper will focus on the relationship between a Colonial photograph, an “Orientalist” postcard, and a pious poster devoted to popular veneration. It will also focus on the image’s metamorphosis by Iranian designers. Finally, it will examine the traditions concerning the origin (in particular the alleged Christian origin) of the portrait, as well as the question of its pictorial transmission.

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Micheline Centlivres-Demont is an anthropologist with field experience in Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, India, Turkey, and Europe. Her research interests include questions of identity, belonging, refugees, diasporas, and popular imagery in Islam. Her publications most relevant for the conference include *Imageries Populaires en Islam*, with Pierre Centlivres (Geneva: Georg, 1997); "La bataille de Kerbela (680/61h.) dans l'imagerie populaire chiite: langage et symboles," in *La Multiplication des Images en Pays d'Islam*, eds. B. Heyberger and S. Naef (Istanbul and Würzburg, 2003), 103-118; and "Une étrange rencontre. La photographie orientaliste de Lehnert et Landrock et l'image iranienne du prophète Mahomet," *Etudes photographiques* 17 (November 2005), 4-15.

Title and Theme of Presentation:

“La famille du Prophète dans l'imagerie populaire contemporaine” (“The Family of the Prophet in Contemporary Popular Imagery”)

This paper will explore a set of popular contemporary posters printed mainly in Iran and Pakistan, showing the Prophet (more often symbolically) and the members of his family. Differing from his representation in pre-modern illustrations, Muhammad, as an adult, is not depicted himself in these posters. Rather, modern popular art makes a great use of his associated symbols: his sandal, his genealogy starting from Adam, the calligraphic rendition of his name, his flying steed al-Buraq, his grave in the Mosque of Medina, and so forth.

In contemporary prints mostly intended for a Shi‘i audience, moreover, Imam ‘Ali is omnipresent and is often accompanied by his sons Hasan and Husein, as well as depictions of the battle of Karbala. Fatima, the Prophet’s daughter, appears veiled, while the Prophet’s wives are represented by their names written in flowers’ corollas. In their production, Iranian artists rely on older Persian painting styles, including those of the Qajar period. They also draw graphic inspiration from contemporary neo-Orientalism.

In more recent years, the production and diffusion of these types of pictorial representations have been restricted in neighbouring countries, especially in Sunni areas. In Afghanistan, for example, the Iranian posters were forbidden since the Taliban regime and have remained so until the present day.

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Brief Biography:

Yorgos Dedes is Lecturer in Turkish at SOAS. His main areas of research comprise Ottoman philology, Ottoman frontier *destans*, and Greek Muslim *aljamiado* literature, including rhyming Greek-Turkish glossaries. His main publications include an edition and study of the Turkish popular epic about Seyyid Battal Gazi, entitled *The Battalname* (Cambridge, Mass., 1996), and a translation of Su‘ûdî’s *Metâlî’ü s-Se‘âdet* (“*The Ascensions of Felicity and Sources of Ascendancy*,” *Book of Felicity* [Moleiro, 2007]). He is currently working on an edition of the Greek *aljamiado* verse translation of the *Mevlid*.

Title and Theme of Presentation:

“A Turkish *Requiem*? Süleyman Çelebi’s *Mevlid* and the Drawing of Muslim-Orthodox Christian Boundaries”

There can be little denying of the enduring popularity, through Ottoman and Republican times, of Süleyman Çelebi’s *Mevlid*. Indeed it could be argued that it established itself as the most popular text in Turkish associated not only with popular piety but also with worship at the mosque. Its popularity and appeal remain extraordinary, even among non-Sunni circles, and it has received a considerable amount of scholarly attention, even if its theological significance is frequently dismissed as marginal. This paper will address the portrayal of the Prophet Muhammad in the *Mevlid* by focusing on his role as an intercessor figure, thereby opening the *Path to Salvation* (the actual title of the poem) for believers.

There remain two intriguing aspects related to the *Mevlid*, which persistently receive very little to no attention by Turkish commentators: first, the issue of its origins and possible role in Muslim-Christian interaction and, second, the transformation of its role as a sort of Turkish *requiem* for the deceased. This paper will examine the ‘success story’ of this literary work that acquired pride of place in Muslim worship and reevaluate the significance of these issues within the context of the veneration of Muhammad in Turkish culture and its missing Orthodox Christian link.

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Brief Biography:

Michelina Di Cesare received her Ph.D. in Classics at the University of Rome “La Sapienza” in 2006 and is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the KHI. Her fields of interest include the history of the manuscript tradition of classical and medieval texts, and text and image issues in the book production in the Latin West. Her publications most relevant to the conference include the appendix to Maria Vittoria Fontana, “Muhammad and Khadijia in an Illustration of a 14th-Century Manuscript of the *Satirica ystoria* by Paulinus Venetus (ms. Vat. Lat. 1960),” in *Gift, Good, Theft: Circulation and Reception of Islamic Objects in Italy and the Mediterranean World, 1250-1500*, eds. G. Wolf and C. Schmidt-Arcangeli (Florence, forthcoming); and “New Sources for the Legend of Muhammad in the West,” *East and West* (forthcoming, 2009).

Title and Theme of Presentation:

“Reading the Bible through Glass: The Image of Muhammad in Sainte-Chapelle”

In Sainte-Chapelle in Paris (1242-1248), among the stained-glass panels illustrating scenes from the book of Isaiah, appears an inscription bearing the name of the Prophet Muhammad. The scene depicted on this panel is comprised of a group of three figures, two of whom pray in front of an altar on which stands a golden statue of a naked young man. Ever since Baron de Guilhermy’s interpretation (1848), the image of Muhammad has traditionally been identified as the figure of the old veiled man kneeling in front of the golden idol.

However, reading this scene as the visual translation of scriptural passages taken from the book of Isaiah rather than a simple illustration of the text, Di Cesare will demonstrate that Muhammad should be identified as the idol itself: that is, as an embodiment of the Antichrist rather than as the idolater. Her argument will be comprised of several points, including a close reading of the inscriptions, the scene’s iconography, the text of Isaiah 44, 6-20, and the panel’s historical context. In so doing, Di Cesare will argue that the stained glass panel in Sainte-Chapelle constitutes an important example of Crusader visual and textual production (*Chansons de geste* excluded) in which Muhammad is depicted as an idol largely due to his identification with the Antichrist.

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Brief Biography:

Matthew Dimmock's work has largely concentrated upon early modern English notions of 'difference', specifically representations of Islam and the Ottoman 'Turk'. His publications include *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England* (2005); *Cultural Encounters Between East and West, 1453-1699*, co-edited with Matthew Birchwood (2005); *A Critical Edition of William Percy's Mahomet and His Heaven* (2006); and *The Religions of the Book: Christian Perceptions, 1400-1660*, co-edited with Andrew Hadfield (2008). He also is currently completing a monograph on English perceptions of the Prophet Muhammad, titled *Fabricating Muhammad: English Imaginings, 1400-1750*.

Title and Theme of Presentation:

“Deceiving with Painted Words: 'Mahomet' in Reformation England”

In this paper, Matthew Dimmock explores the ways in which well-established modes of writing about the Prophet Muhammad in England changed through the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Reformation of the English church. Images, sermons and texts (particularly printed texts) from this period are considered to highlight the increasing complexity of responses to the figure of 'Mahomet' as, for instance, Catholic polemicists sought to equate him with Luther while Protestants sought to do so with the Papacy. Does this present a break with the past? Do we see the emergence in this period of a distinctly Protestant 'Mahomet'?

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Brief Biography:

Dr. Edwards holds degrees from Princeton University (B.A.), University of Michigan (M.A.), and the Institute of Fine Arts, NYU (Ph.D., Islamic art). She teaches at Williams College, offering courses on Islamic art and Orientalism. Her presentation builds on prior publications devoted to (or addressing in part) representations of the Islamic world, including: *Noble Dreams, Wicked Pleasures: American Orientalism 1870-1930* (Princeton University Press, 2000) and *Beautiful Suffering: Photography and the Traffic in Pain* (University of Chicago Press, 2007). It is also enriched by concurrent work on photographic traditions in Iran and Afghanistan (e.g., “Unruly Images: Photography in and Of Afghanistan,” in *Pearls from Water, Rubies from Stone: Studies in Honor of Priscilla Soucek*, ed. Linda Komaroff, *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 66/2 (2007).

Title and Theme of Presentation:

“Yankee Mahomet”

Visualizing the Prophet Muhammad in 19th-century America happened diversely, fueled by missionary aspirations, political ascendancy and burgeoning Orientalism. This paper will focus on one phase of this complex process in the 1840’s and 1850’s, when images of all kinds were proliferating in the public domain and institutionalized Protestantism was subject to sectarian and millennial revisionism. A pivotal moment happened in 1850, when three quite disparate books about the Prophet were published, significantly affecting vernacular understandings of this seminal figure. This study aims to articulate the process by which this plethora of new information coagulated into a reductive but therapeutic foil for myriad social frictions borne of industrialization and urbanization on the eastern seaboard of the United States.

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Dr. Maryam Ekhtiar is a scholar and specialist in the field of later Persian art and culture and Islamic calligraphy. She worked and taught at various museums and universities in the United States, including the Brooklyn Museum of Art. At the Brooklyn Museum of Art, she served as Senior Research Associate for the exhibition, *Royal Persian Paintings: The Qajar Epoch 1785-1925*, and served as co-editor and a major contributor to the exhibition's catalogue. She is currently Senior Research Associate in the Islamic Department, the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Her most recent publications include: "Practice Makes Perfect: The Art of Calligraphy Exercises in Iran, 16th Century to Present," *Muqarnas* 23 (November 2006), and "Revivalism and Eclecticism in later Qajar Calligraphy: The Vesal Family of Shiraz," in *Islamic Art in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Doris Behrens-Abouseif and Vernoit Stephen (Brill Publishers, 2006).

Title and Theme of Presentation:

"Infused with Shi'ism: Representations of the Prophet in Qajar Art"

In the Qajar period, Shi'i symbols and rituals permeated all levels of society, ushering in an efflorescence of cultural and artistic production. Popular religious life gained extraordinary importance as the pious visited the shrines of the Imams and their relatives, participated in *rawzehkhani* (the ritualized sermon) and public Moharram processions, and attended *ta'ziyeh* performances (passion plays commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hussein at Kerbala). In the visual arts, this popular religious spirit manifested itself in a new genre of imagery that began to flourish in the mid-19th century. This genre developed out of Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar's lifelong devotion to 'Ali, the first Shi'i Imam, and his keen interest in portraits of the Prophet Muhammad, Shi'i Imams, and other religious personages. Following royal example, religious paintings and portraits of the Prophet and the Shi'i Imams, particularly 'Ali, Hassan and Hussein, were produced in a variety of media in unprecedented numbers and collected by individuals from different echelons of society. This paper will demonstrate how during this period, particularly in the latter half of the 19th century, depictions of the Prophet Muhammad were eclipsed by Shi'i imagery and integrated into an innovative Shi'i paradigm of religious portraiture.

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Reuven Firestone received his Rabbinic Ordination from Hebrew Union College and Ph.D. from New York University in Arabic and Islamic Studies. His interests include historical and religious interrelations between Jews/Judaism and Muslims/Islam from the period of Islamic emergence, as well as scriptural hermeneutics, especially of the Hebrew Bible and Qur'an. His relevant publications include *Journeys in Holy Lands: The Evolution of the Abraham-Ishmael Legends in Islamic Exegesis* (SUNY Press, 1990), *Jihad: The Origin of Holy War in Islam* (Oxford University Press, 1999), *Children of Abraham: An Introduction to Judaism for Muslims* (Ktav, 2000), *Introduction to Islam for Jews* (Jewish Publication Society, 2008), *Who Are the Real Chosen People? The Meaning of Chosenness in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (Skylight Paths, 2008), and *The Revival of Holy War in Judaism* (Forthcoming, 2009).

Title and Theme of Presentation:

"Meanings of Muhammad in Pre-Modern Jewish Literatures"

As a minority religious community holding little or no political power in any part of the world, Jews had to be circumspect in their polemical and apologetical writings. But like Christians and Muslims, Jews were intent in defending their own religion and religious civilization in a world in which it was common to critique the religious "other." Jewish examples of such writings, however, are less common than Christian or Muslim, and references to Muhammad as well as Jesus tend to be oblique in order to protect the writers and their communities from possible or even likely adverse physical reaction. Even the great and respected Moses Maimonides (d.1204) makes clear in his "Letter to Yemen," sent to bolster the Jews of that land that had come under pressure to convert to Islam, that writing a letter that might be understood as critical of Islam endangered his own personal safety.

Nevertheless, pre-modern Jewish writings ranging from scriptural commentary to legends, legal compendia, and philosophical tracts contain a number of direct or indirect references to Muhammad. The goal of this paper is to collect the various references to Muhammad that occur within a very large library of Jewish literatures and to begin the process of understanding patterns of their purpose and meaning.

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Brief Biography:

Besides her appointment as Full Professor of Islamic Archaeology and History of Art, Maria Vittoria Fontana is also an Archaeologist with fieldwork experience in Iran, Jordan, Yemen. Since 2004, she also has served as Director of the Islamic archaeological projects of the IsIAO, Rome. Her relevant publications include “Una rappresentazione ‘shī‘īta’ di Medina,” *Annali dell’Istituto Orientale di Napoli* 40 (1980), 619-25; *Iconografia dell’Ahl al-bayt. Immagini di arte persiana dal XII al XX secolo* (suppl. 78 to *Annali dell’Istituto Orientale*, 54), Naples 1994; “Nota sull’interpretazione di una miniatura di soggetto shī‘īta,” in *Un ricordo che non si spegne. Scritti di docenti e collaboratori dell’Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli in memoria di Alessandro Bausani*, eds P.G. Donini et al. (Naples 1995), 59-75; and “Muhammad and Khadīja in an Illustration of a 14th-Century Manuscript of the *Satirica Ystoria* by Paulinus Venetus (Ms. Vatican Latin 1960),” in *Gift, Good, Theft: Circulation and Reception of Islamic Objects in Italy and the Mediterranean World, 1250–1500*, eds C. Schmidt Arcangeli and G. Wolf (Florence, forthcoming).

Title and Theme of Presentation:

“Muhammad and an ‘Adoration of the Magi’ in the Gulbenkian Anthology of 813/1411”

This presentation will examine a double-page painting that depicts the Christians of Najran recognizing the Prophet Muhammad included in an early Timurid illustrated compendium of texts. The scene’s composition is very close to European scenes of the ‘Adoration of the Magi’; however, in this case the protagonists include Muhammad, ‘Ali, Hasan, Husayn and the imams.

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Brief Biography:

Christiane Gruber is Assistant Professor of Islamic Art at Indiana University, Bloomington. Her primary area of research is Islamic painting, in particular illustrated books of the Prophet Muhammad's ascension and depictions of Muhammad. She has edited two volumes on Islamic ascension texts and Islamic book arts, and is the author of: *The Ilkhanid Book of Ascension: A Persian-Sunni Devotional Tale* (London, forthcoming, 2009); *The Timurid Book of Ascension (Mi'rajnama): A Study of Text and Image in a Pan-Asian Context* (Valencia, 2008); and the online catalogue of Islamic calligraphies in the Library of Congress (<http://international.loc.gov/intldl/apochtml/apochome.html>). She also recently completed an article entitled "Between Logos (*Kalima*) and Light (*Nur*): Depictions of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Painting," *Muqarnas* (Fall 2009).

Title and Theme of Presentation:

"The Rose of the Prophet: Interstitial Images of Muhammad in Islamic Art"

This paper will examine late Ottoman calligraphic descriptions of the Prophet known as *hilyes* (aniconic icons), with a particular emphasis on the shape of the rose. The rose itself seems to have been invented to convey Muhammad's prophetic redolence, a concept that is developed especially in mystical milieus. For example, Sufi narrative and poetic literature describes Muhammad as "loaded" with the scent of paradise and as a flourishing source of life. These kinds of Ottoman Turkish textual and visual materials bear witness to an ongoing process of abstracting the prophetic body into flora and aroma in an attempt to convey the cosmic sum of the Prophet Muhammad as primordial and celestial entity. Likewise, they functioned as creative channels and "interstitial" pictorial mechanisms that helped pave the way for the eventual disappearance of physical depictions of the Prophet during the modern period.

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Brief Biography:

Robert Hillenbrand is Honorary Professorial Fellow at Edinburgh University, where he taught Islamic art from 1971 until 2007. He has written and edited a number of works on medieval Islamic book painting, especially that of Iran under Mongol rule. A volume of collected articles on this topic is in press. He also is the author of over 140 articles on various aspects of Islamic art and architecture, including “Images of Muhammad in al-Biruni’s *Chronology of Ancient Nations*,” in *Persian Painting from the Mongols to the Qajars: Studies in Honour of Basil W. Robinson*, ed. idem (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 129–146. With his wife Carole Hillenbrand, he is currently preparing a full study of the Edinburgh World History (*Jami‘ al-Tawarikh*) of Rashid al-Din.

Title and Theme of Presentation:

"Muhammad as Warrior Prophet: Images from the *World History* of Rashid al-Din"

Three images from the Khalili fragment of the *World History* of Rashid al-Din (714/1314) depict respectively the prelude to the Battle of Badr, the campaign against the Banu Qaynaqa' and the submission of the Banu'l-Nadir. These are the only images dealing with the battles of the Prophet that survive from the Arabic version of the *World History* produced in the lifetime of Rashid al-Din. They complement the depictions in the Edinburgh fragment, which cover the earlier life of the Prophet. The paper will consider these martial images in the context of other Ilkhanid depictions of the Prophet before concentrating on the interplay of text and image in this part of the book. The paper will analyze the conflicting attractions of convention and invention in these scenes. It will also explore the challenges which the painters faced in finding an appropriate visual equivalent for Muhammad's unique status in Islam.

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Brief Biography:

After completing her Ph.D. thesis on the Wilton diptych and artistic exchange between France and England around 1400 (published in Berlin 1996), Ulrike Ilg worked as a lecturer in the Department of Art History at the University of Giessen. Since 1998 she has been a fellow at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz. In 2005 she completed her German “Habilitation” with a study of the illustrations in the 16th-century report published by the French Royal geographer after his travels in the Ottoman Empire (see Ulrike Ilg, “Vom Reisebericht zum ethnographischen Kompendium: zur Rezeptionsgeschichte von Nicolas de Nicolays *Quatre premiers livres des navigations et peregrinations orientales* (1567),” in *Text und Bild in Reiseberichten des 16. Jahrhunderts: Westliche Zeugnisse über Amerika und das Osmanische Reich*, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, *Studi e ricerche* 3 (Venice, 2008), 161-192. She continues to study the rise of “Orientalist” iconography in Western art during the early modern period.

Title and Theme of Presentation:

“Writing versus Showing: Religious Polemics and Visual Realism in a late 16th-Century Biography of the Prophet Mohammad”

The paper will focus on two books published and illustrated by the famous Frankfurt editor Theodor de Bry and his two sons during the last decade of the 16th century. Both books indicate that Europeans cultivated a two-fold interest in the Ottomans: one of the books gives detailed information on the biography of the Ottoman rulers, while the other deals with the life and accomplishments of the Prophet Muhammad. In both cases the editors, who since 1590 were printing a lavishly illustrated series of travel reports from America in 14 parts, created their illustrations with the help of material published in de Nicolay’s *Navigations et Peregrinations orientales*. While the text appears to be enflamed by recurrent religious polemics, de Brys’ engravings attempt to present the reader with up-to-date ethnographic knowledge.

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Brief Biography:

José Martínez Gázquez is Professor of Latin Philology at Barcelona University. He also is the Director of the Islamolatina Project, which analyzes the perception of Islam in Europe (see <http://hipatia.uab.cat/islamolatina>). He is interested in the reception of Islam in Christian Europe, as well as Latin translations of the Qur'an, medieval Latin texts, and hagiographies. Some of his publications include: "Trois traductions médiévales latines du Coran: Pierre le Venerable-Robert de Ketton, Marc de Tolède et Jean de Segobia," *Revue des Études Latines* 80 (2002), 223-236; "El Prólogo de Juan de Segobia al Corán (*Qur'an*) trilingüe (1456)," *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 38 (2003), 389-410; "El lenguaje de la violencia en el prólogo de la traducción latina del Corán impulsada por Pedro el Venerable," *Cahiers d'Études hispaniques medievales* 28 (2005), 243-252; and, with M. Barceló (eds.), *Musulmanes y cristianos en Hispania durante las conquistas de los siglos XII y XIII* (Bellaterra, 2005).

Title and Theme of Presentation:

"La figura de Mahoma en el Corpus Islamolatinum" ("The Figure of Muhammad in the Prologues of Medieval Latin Translations of the Qur'an")

The Latin translations of the Qur'an and the collection of texts called *Corpus islamolatinum*, prompted by Peter the Venerable, the Abbot of Cluny, translated in Spain around the years 1142-1143, represent the first Western Christian attempt to address original Islamic texts five hundred years after the arrival of the Islam. There are different reasons why several other Latin translations of the Qur'an appeared during the Middle and Modern Age in the intellectual environments in Latin Europe. Dr. Gázquez will analyze the characteristic features used by translators to describe Muhammad in the prologues of Medieval Latin translations of the Qur'an. The objective is to study key themes, deformations, and prejudices that derive from either ignorance or to serve in the physical and intellectual fight against a perceived enemy. This study will be framed within the Islamolatina research project, "The Perception of Islam in Christian Europe: Latin Translations of the Qur'an and Literature of Confrontation," which aims to create a corpus of critical editions and studies of the texts that emerged during European-Muslim confrontations.

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Inés Monteiro graduated from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid in 2002 and is currently a Ph.D. candidate. Affiliated with the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Madrid) since 2005 and Associated Professor at the IE University (Segovia) and Middlebury College (Madrid), her research now focuses on Romanesque sculpture as propaganda against Islam during the periods of the Crusades and the *Reconquista*. She wrote *La influencia islámica en la escultura románica de Soria* (Madrid, 2005), and her articles have been published in Spanish and French in scientific journals, including *Codex Aquilarensis* (2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007), *Celtiberia* (2005), and proceedings of international congresses (*Transpyrenalia* 2007, *Relegados al Margen*, CSIC 2007). The article that is most representative of her research is “La propagande contre l’Islam dans la sculpture romane du chemin de Saint-Jacques,” *Compostelle* 9 (2006), 10-35.

Title and Theme of Presentation:

"Les musulmans idolâtres et l’adoration de Mahomet: Une iconographie contre l’Islam dans la sculpture Romane" ("Muslim Idolaters and Muhammad's Adoration: Anti-Islamic Iconography in Romanesque Sculpture")

Romanesque art emerged during the periods of the Crusades and *Reconquista*, and its iconography served as a powerful tool of propaganda against Islam. The frequent depiction of Muslims as idolaters adoring Muhammad's idol included in chronicles, chansons de geste, and other texts offer several clues to interpret images of animals and humans prostrated in Romanesque sculpture as Muslims idolaters. The prostrated figures often appear introducing their head in a big monstrous mouth. This iconography seems to be connected to the illustrations included in the Beatus manuscripts that depict “Frog-like spirits issuing from the mouths of the Pseudo-Prophet,” thereby suggesting a common origin of both iconographies as they were deployed to interpolate the Apocalypse within the European fight against Islam during the period of the Crusades and *Reconquista*.

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Brief Biography:

Suleiman Ali Mourad is Associate Professor of Religion and Director of Medieval Studies at Smith College. He is also the Vice-President of Middle East Medievalists (MEM). He earned his Ph.D. from Yale University in 2004. His publications include the monograph *Early Islam between Myth and History: al-Hasan al-Basri (d. 110 H/728 CE) and the formation of His Legacy in Classical Islamic Scholarship* (Brill, 2005), the co-edited book (with Tamar Mayer) *Jerusalem: Idea and Reality* (Routledge, 2008), and the co-authored monograph (with James Lindsay) *'Fighting in the Path of God': Ibn 'Asakir and Jihad Ideology in the Crusader Period* (Ashgate, forthcoming, 2010). His most recent publication on Muhammad is entitled "Christians and Christianity in the *Sira* of Muhammad," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History, Vol. 1 (600–900)*, eds. D. Thomas and B. Roggema (Brill, 2009). He is currently preparing a biography of Muhammad for Hackett Publishing.

Title and Theme of Presentation:

"The Full-Moon Rose in Our Midst: Mapping Muhammad's Many Legacies in Classical Islamic Scholarship"

This paper will examine the major themes that feature in classical Islamic scholarship on Muhammad as testimony and celebration of his many legacies, especially his annunciation, *'ismah* (infallibility), miracles, and mystical legacy. The paper will also explore why particular themes were important to particular authors, and how they articulated them in response to views made by other Muslims or non-Muslims. This mapping of Muhammad's many legacies allows for a better understanding of the process of his veneration as comprising complex and diverse phenomena that were only streamlined at a much later period in Islamic history, hence the Muhammad whom modern Muslims have come to know and revere.

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Brief Biography:

Barbara Roggema received her Ph.D. in Languages and Cultures of the Middle East at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. Her fields of specialization include early Eastern Christian responses to Islam, especially polemical and apocalyptic texts. Her publications include: *The Legend of Sergius Bahira: Eastern Christian Apologetics and Apocalyptic in Response to Islam* (Leiden, 2008); and with M. Poorthuis and P. Valkenberg, *The Three Rings: Textual Studies in the Historical Trialogue of Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (Louvain, 2005).

Title and Theme of Presentation:

“The Syriac *Sira*?: Re-Evaluating Syriac Writings about Muhammad”

This paper will evaluate Syriac writings (7th-9th c) about Muhammad’s life, the beginning of Islam, and the origin of the Qur’an. By comparing them with other Eastern Christian writings from this early period, Roggema aims to show that there are only a few distinctive *topoi* in the ‘Syriac *Sira*,’ among these a positive portrayal of Muhammad’s alleged Christian mentor and his call to monotheism. These *topoi* appear to derive from the apologetic agendas of the authors and not from historical ‘observations’ of the rise of Islam.

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Brief biography:

Alberto Saviello studied the history, art history, and Romance literature at the universities of Düsseldorf and Rome. He received his Master's degree in 2003 in Düsseldorf. He currently is a doctoral fellow at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz / Max-Planck-Institut, and a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Art History at the University of Munich. His dissertation is entitled, "Representations of the Prophet Muhammad in Printed European Qur'an Translations." He has recently completed two articles on Ottoman and European relations: "Felix Petančić's *Historia Turcica*: A Central European view on the Ottoman Empire?" in *Osmanischer Orient und Ostmitteleuropa. Perzeptionen und Interaktionen in den Grenzzonen zwischen dem 16. und 18. Jahrhundert* (in press); and "El Gran Turco - Der Topos des 'maskierten' Sultans in der Druckgraphik des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts," in *Gift, Good, Theft: Circulation and Reception of Islamic Objects in Italy and the Mediterranean World, 1250-1500*, eds. G. Wolf and C. Schmidt-Arcangeli (Florence, forthcoming).

Title and Theme of Presentation:

“‘In the Desert Prepare the Way for the Lord’: The Depiction of Muhammad in an 1872 Illustrated Spanish Translation of the Qur'an”

This presentation deals with one of the earliest printed Qur'an translations in Spanish language entitled *El Corán o Biblia Mahometana*, edited by Vicente Ortiz de la Puebla in 1872. Emerging after centuries of Catholic censorship in Spain, the book presents with its rich illustration a new and more positive view of the Prophet Muhammad and of Islam in general. This paper analyzes the relations between the text and its images to determine the significance of this translation within the broader tradition of Spanish and European perceptions of Islam.

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Brief Biography:

Larry Silver is Farquahar Professor of Art History at the University of Pennsylvania. He is a specialist in painting and graphics of Northern Europe in the era of the Reformation. He has published numerous books and articles. Among his recent books are: *Hieronymus Bosch* (2006) and *Marketing Maximilian* (2008). His co-authored volume (with Shelley Perlove) entitled *Rembrandt's Faith* will appear in 2009. He has also authored a recent essay on the image of the Turk in Northern European art for a future volume edited by James Harper.

Title and Theme of Presentation:

"Mohammed, Maximilian and Mandeville: Constructing a Muslim Nemesis"

Dutch printmaker Lucas van Leyden dedicated his first major dated print (1508) to a legend of Mohammed and the Monk Sergius, a fanciful explanation for the Muslim prohibition on alcohol. This paper will investigate the source of that obscure legend in a wide-ranging, fanciful, late medieval account, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, available in manuscripts in multiple European languages but first printed in 1470 in Germany. In contrast, the account of Mohammed in the first full-scale published world history, the Nuremberg *World Chronicle* (1493), provides a more conventional account of Mohammed and the rise of Islam, seen from the early modern perspective of an imperial city of the Holy Roman Empire, already engaged in conflict with its nemesis, the Ottomans.

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Debra Higgs Strickland is an art historian with a special interest in medieval Christian representations of non-Christians. Her major publications on this subject include *Saracens, Demons, and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); "Artists, Audience, and Ambivalence in Marco Polo's *Divisament dou monde*," *Viator* 36 (2005), 493-529; and "The Jews, Leviticus, and the Unclean in Medieval English Bestiaries," in *Beyond the Yellow Badge: Anti-Judaism and Antisemitism in Medieval and Early Modern Visual Culture*, ed. Mitchell B. Merback (Leiden: Brill, 2008). Her new book study, *The Epiphany of Hieronymus Bosch: Imagining Antichrist and Others from the Middle Ages to the Reformation* (Brepols, forthcoming) examines Bosch's images of non-Christians, especially Jews and Muslims, in relation to Christian eschatological fantasies and the broader cultural contexts in which they were viewed.

Title and Theme of Presentation:

"Meanings of Muhammad in Later Medieval Art"

This paper will address the problem of why there was no fixed iconography for the representation of the Prophet Muhammad in Western Christian art of the later Middle Ages, and whether the very instability of representation served important cultural and theological purposes. In spite of the ubiquity of his presence in the written sources, portrayals of Muhammad in works of Western medieval pictorial art are surprisingly few. Most intriguingly, they vary widely in form and require additional verbal support for correct identification. Pictured sometimes as a man or as a beast, a monster, or even an object, images of the Prophet were combined with verbal descriptors that suggest links to contemporary polemic and theological notions of anti-orthodoxy.

Of particular interest is the integration of Muhammad into eschatological contexts, such as commentaries on the Apocalypse, and the ways in which such imagery facilitated the misrecognition of Antichrist. A small sample of eschatological portraits of Muhammad will be examined alongside other types of portrayals and comparative imagery that will highlight different themes relevant to the cultural meanings communicated in pictures of the Prophet, including heresy, idolatry, and changeability.

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Brief Biography:

John Tolan is Professor of History at the University of Nantes, France, and Director of the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme Ange Guépin. He works on the history of religious and cultural relations between the Arab and Latin worlds in the Middle Ages. His books include *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), *Sons of Ishmael: Muslims through European Eyes in the Middle Ages* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), and *Saint Francis and the Sultan: The Curious History of a Christian-Muslim Encounter* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009; French edition published in Paris: Seuil, 2007).

Title and Theme of Presentation:

"Impostor or Lawgiver? Muhammad through European Eyes in the 17th and 18th Centuries"

For centuries, Muhammad has been at the center of European discourse on Islam. Medieval polemicists and chroniclers often portrayed him as a shrewd heresiarch who had worked false miracles to seduce the Arabs away from Christianity: as such, the root of Saracen error and an implicit justification of wars of conquest against Saracens. This medieval polemical image proved tenacious; in slightly modified forms, it provided the dominant European discourse on Muhammad the "impostor" in the seventeenth century. Yet, beginning in the eighteenth century, some European authors present the Prophet in a favorable light: as an inspired religious reformer and great legislator.

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Brief Biography:

Brannon Wheeler is Professor of History at the United States Naval Academy. He is the author and editor of a number of books and articles in the history of religions with particular focus on Islam and its relation with Judaism, Christianity, and Buddhism. His most recent book is *Mecca and Eden: Ritual, Relics, and Territory in Islam* (Chicago, 2006). Earlier work includes research on the Qur'an and Bible, Islamic law, and the history of the study of religion. Currently, he is doing research on the ancient origins of the sanctuary at Mecca and the pre-Islamic cultic practices related to certain pilgrimage sites in the Arabian peninsula.

Title and Theme of Presentation:

"Collecting the Dead Body of the Prophet Muhammad: Hair, Nails, Sweat and Spit"

This paper focuses on the farewell pilgrimage of the Prophet Muhammad during which he is reported to have offered his hair and the meat of a camel sacrifice to his followers. It examines the relationship between the Muhammad's sacrifice of the camels and the distribution of his hair at the conclusion of his farewell pilgrimage just before his death. The analysis pays particular attention to reports, especially associated with Umm Sulaym, of the Prophet Muhammad's followers collecting his 'relics,' especially his hair, nails, sweat, and spit. A study of the accounts of the Prophet's camel sacrifice shows that it prefigures the annual rites of the *hajj* using the biblical model of Abraham's sacrifice to align other pre-Islamic practices, including those associated with the cult at Mecca, with the origins of a specifically Islamic civilization. The Prophet Muhammad's distribution of his hair, detached from his body at the time of his desacralization from the *hajj* delineates the Meccan sanctuary as the place of origination from which was spread both the physical and textual corpus of the Prophet's life. Whether by design or not, the traditional Islamic descriptions of this episode from the life of Muhammad are not unlike narratives found in Buddhist, Iranian, Christian and other traditions in which the body of a primal being is dismembered to create a new social order. Through the gift of the sacrificial camels and parts of his own body, the Prophet Muhammad is portrayed, in this episode, as making a figurative and literal offering of himself as the origins of Islamic civilization.

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Brief Biography:

Kenneth Baxter Wolf is the John Sutton Miner Professor of History at Pomona College. He began his career working on the so-called Cordoban Martyrs' movement (850s) and from there moved into studies of the earliest Latin Christian views of Islam. He has worked on Christian sanctity and the idea of voluntary poverty, leading to a revisionist study of St. Francis of Assisi and a forthcoming translation and study of the canonization records related to St. Elizabeth of Hungary. His most relevant studies are: *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain* (Cambridge, 1988); *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*, translation and introduction (Liverpool, 1990. Revised edition: 1999); "The Earliest Latin Lives of Muhammad," in *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries*, eds. M. Gervers and R. Bikhazi (Toronto, 1990), 89-101; and "Muhammad as Antichrist in Ninth-Century Cordoba," in *Medieval and Early Modern Spain: Interaction and Cultural Change*, eds. M. Meyerson and E. English (University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 3-19.

Title and Theme of Presentation:

"Counterhistory in the Earliest Latin Lives of Muhammad"

The concept of counterhistory— that is, the process whereby an adversary's official history is co-opted and modified for polemical purposes— has proved a useful tool for appreciating the earliest Christian lives of Muhammad. Examples from the Greek, Syriac, and Arabic traditions show how their Christian authors strategically accepted some of the basic claims of Muslim historians only to attack their official narrative from the inside. By treating the two earliest Latin Christian lives of Muhammad—the *Istoria de Mahomet* and the *Tultusceptrum de libro domni Metobii*— as examples of counterhistories, this paper will show how the "strategic acceptance" of certain aspects of Muhammad's career could be more than a polemical strategy. Though no less designed to undercut Islam, the *Tultusceptrum* account of Muhammad's origins provided a space within which Christians could justify their more positive interactions with Muslims without feeling like they were compromising their own religious identity. In this sense it played a role akin to that of the Syriac Christian Bahira legend, which also depicted Muhammad in a surprisingly positive light. The historical context of the *Tultusceptrum* account may even help us appreciate the circumstances that led to the propagation of the Christian Bahira legend.