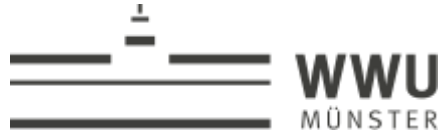




RECHT UND LITERATUR
SFB 1385



Monthly Lectures on Islamic Legal Genres: Genre as a Tool for Understanding Islamic Law

Prof. Dr. Murteza Bedir

Form, Function and Historical Development of Uṣūl al-fiqh as a Genre

January 27th, Wednesday 11 (EST), 5pm (Münster) 7pm (Istanbul) time via zoom

The presentation is part of a monthly lecture series organized by the Project “Canonization and Diversification in Islamic Law and in Arabian Rhetoric in Comparison” situated in the collaborative Research Centre (SFB 1385) at the Münster University, in cooperation with Program of Islamic Law at Harvard Law School and the Faculty of Theology at Istanbul University. The project investigates the diversification of literary genres in Islamic law in the so called “post classical” era (14th to 19th centuries CE). Towards the end of the 13th century, Islamic law underwent a process of canonization, with the result that certain texts and schools became authoritative. This canonization process led to a stabilization of the legal discourse. At the same time, however, a diversification of the legal text production can be observed in the centuries following the canonization, involving the emergence of various new legal genres.

The project’s approach is based on the hypothesis that the development towards different genres was concomitant to a diversification in terms of content: the different genres represent different discursive levels with different functions. While some genres served to stabilize the discourse, others provided a forum to develop more flexible and nuanced positions. The project seeks to look at the development of the postclassical legal discourse with a special focus on genre diversification in order to provide a multidimensional perspective. This way, we seek to demonstrate the dynamics of canonization and diversification in Islamic law. If our hypothesis can be corroborated, it follows that canonization processes in law did have a stabilizing effect, yet did not simply end in stagnation or stereotyping. Rather, one may argue that the interaction of canonization and diversification served as a strategy to lend the discourse stability and flexibility at the same time.

With monthly lectures and consecutive Workshops, we seek to analyze different genres from different angles. What are the relevant genres that exist in Islamic legal literature? What function does each genre have? Put differently, why have different genres emerged? In monthly meetings (final Wednesday of each month) we will invite an expert to talk about one of the genres and ask the question of the form, function and historical development of each genre. These monthly lectures will culminate in an international symposium at the end of the year, where the genre-based approach should be discussed broadly. Parallel to the monthly lectures a database of bibliographies for each genre will be constructed. The first lecture will be held by Prof. Murteza Bedir on form, function and historical development of Uṣūl al-fiqh as a genre.

Organizers: Hakki Arslan (Collaborative Research Center (SFB 1385) at the Münster University), Intisar Rabb (Program of Islamic Law at Harvard Law School), Necmettin Kızılkaya (Department of Islamic Law at Istanbul University Faculty of Theology)