

مساهمة المؤسسة الاستشرافية الألمانية في حوار الحضارات

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المُلخَص

تبدو عناية الاستشراق المعاصر بالخطاب الإعلامي والسياسي عناية قليلة جداً ، لكن أهمية ما يكتبه العلماء في هذا الإطار نما وتطور في العقد الأخير؛ إذ إن بعض هؤلاء العلماء يكتب للعامة أو للجمهور ، وغاية هذا البحث تتأني على دراسة تلقي العامة أو الجمهور ما يكتبه العلماء من المستشرقين حول القضايا المتصلة بحوار الحضارات.

Recent Developments in the Arab World”, in November, by the Department of Political Science at the Catholic University of Eichstaett about “Islam and Democracy: Compatible or Incompatible?”, and by the authority responsible for continuing education of the teachers of Catholic religion at secondary schools in my county Thuringia, about “Islam and Violence”; and in December, by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, belonging to the German Liberal Party, about “Recent Trends in the Arab World: Towards Democracy or back (!!) to Islamism ?”. The last field worth mentioning is the education of graduates who later work for newspapers and TV networks. As the number of newspapers who can afford an own specialist for Near Eastern affairs etc., their number will always be limited. But take for example the “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” as one of the few big ones. They employ Wolfgang Günter Lerch and Rainer Hermann, both of whom studied Islamic Studies. Their articles are well-informed and free from any ideological bias.

limit of pages on one hand forces the authors to express themselves in a highly precise and concise way. On the other hand, the expectation of the customers to get through it in two or three evenings secures a very good print run – at least compared with the number of copies printed of a purely scholarly work on, let us say, rhetorics in al-Mutanabbi's odes; of such books, rarely more than 200 to 300 copies are printed. The three best-sold titles written by orientalists from the "Beck Knowledge" series were sold about 40.000 to 50.000 times. Besides such small books, there is a new tendency towards longer monographs evidently or outspokenly written for the wider public and the scholar-colleague as well. A particularly suitable example is a monograph by Angelika Neuwirth of more than 850 pages length, in English translation bearing the title "The Qur'an as Text of Late Antiquity. A European Approach". The content is less revolutionary or heretical than it might be understood at first sight. Rather, the title is meant to attract attention by making the Qur'an part of the European tradition or rather of a tradition which we are accustomed to regard as formative in the later development of Europe. Whether the academic or general readers will really receive the book and not only buy it is difficult to predict. A certain danger becomes visible in the wording of the title: There is a temptation for orientalists not only to explain certain phenomena from Arabic and Islamic history but rather to help Arabs and Muslims. A desire to help is nothing bad in itself, but it should never seduce into presenting an eclectic or distorted image of Arab and Muslim past. I do not think that Neuwirth did so, except perhaps the title of her book and two sentences in the introduction, which does not carry any weight in a book of such length. In another recently published book entitled in English translation "The Culture of Ambiguity", the Arabist Thomas Bauer has not succeeded in my view in resisting the temptations of one-sidedness. One of the last fields I would like to mention are lectures to a non-academic or at least a non-orientalist public. It is difficult to find out how many of such lectures are offered by German orientalists, but I was asked five times in the year 2011 for such lectures: in January, by the Protestant Church Parish in Jena about "The 'correct' and the 'misused' Islam", in May, by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, belonging to our Conservative Party, about "Islam, Islamism and

of public curiosity was the historian Heinz Halm from Tuebingen University, who retired five years ago. Already in 1991, in the early days of Islamophobia, he wrote an article in the national newspaper "Sueddeutsche Zeitung" entitled "Die Panikmacher", in English "The Scaremongers". He attacked some self-styled experts on Islam, primarily journalists, for their stereotyped and ill-informed articles, telecasts and books on the Islamic danger. Other academic scholars followed his example, and they were fairly successful: Gerhard Konzelmann stopped writing anything about the Arabs and Islam after a highly critical book by Gernot Rotter from Hamburg University was published in 1992, and he finished his life composing operas. Peter Scholl-Latour was subject of another critical collective volume written by young authors also from Hamburg University and published in 1993. Its title was "Das Schwert des Experten", that is "The Sword of the Expert", which was an allusion to Scholl-Latour's own book "The Sword of Islam". The authors analyzed with great relish the demagogic style of Scholl-Latour's arguments, and he, too, almost stopped writing and reporting about the Arabs and the Muslims for some years. After 911, however, he became a much-in-demand expert again, because many Germans thought that this event finally proved that Scholl-Latour had been right from the beginning. But Heinz Halm and others did not confine themselves to writing polemics. Fewer than a handful of books for a wider circle of readers and not only for other scholars had been written before 1990. From then on, their number increased steadily. One fine example is the series "Beck Wissen", that is "Beck Knowledge", published by the renowned Beck Verlag in Munich. The books within this series are small, have a nice cover and do not exceed the limit of 110 to 120 pages without the bibliography and index. Some of these small monographs that were given to me by the authors I brought with me to give you an impression of the format. They treat the subjects of the Crusades, the Mughal Empire, History of Iran and the Ottoman Empire, Islamic Philosophy, The Qur'an and Muhammad, all are written by experts and deal with their subject-matter neutrally. Other volumes are devoted to the Arabs, Islamic Spain, the Mosque and the Shiites. In a way, all these small books can be regarded on the level of content as following the example of Annemarie Schimmel's books. But the

outside the academic and – perhaps - political spheres. The first professional orientalist who had a real interest in informing the German public of many aspects of Islamic culture is someone who never was a regular professor in Germany but well-known world-wide – Annemarie Schimmel. In numerous books and lectures, she addressed a wider public since the 1970's until her death in 2003. Her favourite topics were Sufism and its literature, poetry in general, Islam in India, the role of women and the female in Islam, Islamic names, festivals, art and much more. From the year 1979 onwards, since the Iranian revolution, a new topic came to the fore, namely the phenomenon of political Islam. This was something Annemarie Schimmel tried to ignore or to play down. When she made comments on this facet of Islamic culture, these were considered unsatisfactory and naive and undermined, in the eyes of some, her credibility and the credibility of Islamic studies in general. To explain beautiful things like Sufism and poetry in great detail and at the same time having no explanation for the immense success of the writings of, let us say, Sayyid Qutb, left the impression that Schimmel and her colleagues saw the Islamic world through rose-coloured glasses and to convey an eclectic picture of it.

While there are quite a number of experts on contemporary politics of the Near East in France, most German orientalists are members of faculties of Arts. In the institutes for Political Science all over Germany, there are just four experts on the politics of the contemporary Arab world. The other colleagues from the faculties of Art, specialised in areas like the history of Ottoman Syria, Mamluk poetry, medieval Arabic astronomy, Hadith studies or Sufism in North Africa, nevertheless have to answer some of the questions asked by the public and the media. If they refused to do so, there would be no future for Arabic and Islamic studies in the long run. As you can imagine, this development has significantly changed the demands made on scholars. On the one hand, there is less time for those fields of research they really consider their mission. On the other hand, the number of professors of Islamic studies has slightly increased from 29 to 33 in the years from 1997 and 2011; at the same time, the once very important Classical studies have shrunk from 200 to 158 professors. One of those who from a very early time on did his best to satisfy the demands

the first level in the beginning and will do so without reopening the discussion about Orientalism (with a capital “o”) and other theories about knowledge and power. Of course the establishment of Arabic and Islamic Studies at German universities in the second half of the 19th century has had its politico-ideological background, and the scholars themselves were children of their time. But the results, in Germany even more often than in England or France, can even today be read and used with immense gain. Just take Wilhelm Ahlwardt’s monumental catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts of the Royal Library in Berlin. In 10 large volumes, Ahlwardt catalogued all the manuscripts in the possession of that library and arranged his catalogue systematically according to the subject-matter of the works and even included references to other works treating the same topic. As I hear from the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, the successor institution of the Royal Library, the catalogues are still used all over the Arab world and by Arab visitors to the library, which is facilitated by the fact that there are indexes in Arabic characters. Carl Brockelmann’s history of Arabic literature, which was translated into Arabic some decades ago, could not have been written without Ahlwardt’s work and is still widely used in the Arab world. Another example is the numerous text editions published in the well-known series “Bibliotheca Islamica”, among them the complete edition of as-Safadi’s *al-Wafi bi-l-wafayat* in 30 volumes, completed after 70 years of work, or the best critical edition of the *Diwan* of Abu Nuwas by Ewald Wagner (and Gregor Schoeler), completed with the index volumes in 2006, 49 years after volume 1. A certain problem is posed by the fact that the number of scholars with a reading knowledge of German becomes smaller from year to year, and the Arabs are, of course, no exception to this rule. But many articles and monographs are meanwhile published in English, so that they have a chance of being read. The message that is conveyed by much of this scholarly work is an intrinsic interest in the details of Arabic language, literature and culture far beyond any ideological considerations, and great sympathy for the Arab heritage as well.

The enlightenment of the German public about traditions and present developments in the Arab and Muslim world is another contribution of orientalists to the dialogue of cultures, because knowledge of other cultures is quite limited

The contribution of German academic orientalism to the «Dialogue of Cultures» Tilman Seidensticker

The term “orientalism” in the title of my paper is used as a common designation for both Arabic and Islamic Studies. There is some degree of overlap between these two disciplines, but their aims are different. While Arabic Studies have to do with Arabic language and literature and cultural history, Islamic Studies are devoted to the history of religion, theology, law, political thought and ideas in general in the Islamic world, past and present. There are many more professorships for Islamic than for Arabic Studies, but maybe the few Arabists have a better life, at least perhaps before the beginning of the Arab Spring. Their range of responsibility is much better delimited, while their colleagues from Islamic Studies have to answer almost every question concerning the Islamic world in the last 1400 years. It is a really strange position – just imagine one to two professors for “Christian Studies” at Kuwait University being responsible for every question concerning the whole of European religious, theological, juridical etc. history, and also for the political history of Europe for almost 2000 years and Europe’s contemporary developments.

The number of German universities where there are professors for Arabic or Islamic Studies (or both) is about 20. As a rule, the number of these professors is no more than two to three; a number of four or more specialists for the Arabic and Islamic world, as there is at Marburg and Leipzig, is a rare exception. In some additional cases, the number of four is reached if one also takes the colleagues into consideration who are specialized in the Turkish or Iranian world.

These 40 to 50 persons responsible for the Arabic and Islamic world at about 20 German universities have at their side about a dozen experts at the “Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik” (Foundation for Research and Politics”) in Berlin and in some other institutions outside universities. What is the contribution of these few persons to the dialogue of cultures? There are two levels to be discerned, the level of communication with the Arab world and the level of giving information to German society. I will deal with

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