

# Zukunftsp hilologie

Forum  
Transregionale  
Studien

Freie Universität



Berlin

FRIEDRICH SCHLEGEL  
GRADUIERTENSCHULE  
für literaturwissenschaftliche Studien

## Lecture cum Seminar

Thursday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012, 4 – 7 pm

Freie Universität Berlin, Habelschwerdter Allee 45, Room J 24/122d

**Basem L. Ra'ad**

(Al-Quds University, Jerusalem)

**Palestine and the Eastern Mediterranean:  
Terminologies and the Politics of (Un)Naming**

**Chair: Islam Dayeh**

(Freie Universität Berlin)

### Abstract:

This seminar proposes philological and paradigmatic reframing to deal with common terminology, classification of ancient languages, periodization, transcription conventions, and biases in other aspects such as toponymy. Traditional accumulations about the “Holy Land,” the construct of Western civilization and current claim systems are factors imprinted in the public mind and direct the agendas of mainstream scholarship. These factors affect what we know about the Eastern Mediterranean (“the Middle East”, “the Biblical World”, “the cradle of civilization”) and Palestine, and have created an epistemology, terminologies and appropriative complexes that are either invented or distorted. Furthermore, present investments profitably promote past ignorance, while new discoveries are generally fitted within pre-existing models. Against such powerful influence, the need arises for corrective historical-cultural perspectives and for methods to surface alternative knowledge that would re-center “Palestine” as an epistemological issue of worldwide significance.

This seminar introduces issues related to terminological and other language biases affecting the region (including classification of ancient languages, periodization, transcription conventions, and other linguistic aspects such as toponymy), with a view toward possibly revising philological and paradigmatic concerns.

## Seminar Texts:

- Ra'ad, Basem: *Hidden Histories: Palestine and the Eastern Mediterranean*. (Pluto Press, 2010), "Preface"; Chapter 5 "Wheels of Fortune: The Alphabet"; Chapter 7 "Appropriation: Zionist Cultural Takeover".
- Benvenisti, Meron: *Sacred Landscape: The Buried History of the Holy Land since 1948*. (University of California Press, 2001), Chapter 1 "The Hebrew Map".

**Basem L. Ra'ad** is Professor of English and Cultural Studies at Al-Quds University. Born in Jerusalem, he studied in Jordan, Lebanon, the U.S. and Canada, earning a PhD at the University of Toronto. He has taught in Bahrain, Canada, Lebanon, Palestine and the U.S., worked as an editor and community organizer, and has publications on literature, linguistics, landscape aesthetics, travel writing, tourist information, cultural studies, and identity politics. His recent book is entitled *Hidden Histories: Palestine and the Eastern Mediterranean* (2010).

## Lecture-cum-Seminar

The Lecture-cum-Seminar series is a central element of the scholarly program of the Zukunftsphilologie project. It is conceived as a working seminar of 3 to 5 hours. The lecture (ca. 45-60 minutes) is meant to introduce the audience to the research problem and provide the general analytical and theoretical framework for the topic. This is followed by a practical seminar, wherein the speaker demonstrates his or her case by reference to texts in the original language and in English translation. It is hoped that this Lecture-cum-Seminar series, a combination of theory and a direct engagement with texts, will enable scholars to examine the comparative aspect of the problematic without neglect of the local and singular nature of the texts examined.

## Zukunftsphilologie: Revisiting the Canons of Textual Scholarship

The project Zukunftsphilologie endeavours to promote and emphasize primary textual scholarship beyond the classical humanistic canon. In an age of advanced communication, intellectual specialization, and unprecedented migration of knowledge and people, the discipline of philology assumes new relevance. Zukunftsphilologie aspires to support research in neglected varieties of philology with the explicit aim to integrate texts and scholarly traditions from Asia, Africa, the Middle East as well as from Europe itself.

Zukunftsphilologie refers to the polemic between the classicist Ulrich von Wilamowitz and Friedrich Nietzsche around the method and meaning of classical studies. As a project it sees itself as part of a growing trend towards a more global intellectual history. It is inspired in particular by the work of Edward Said and Sheldon Pollock.

In order to promote historically-conscious philology, Zukunftsphilologie will foster research in the following areas: genealogies and transformations of philological practice, philology's place in the system of knowledge (e.g. its relation to science, theology and jurisprudence), and philology and the university.

# Zukunftsphilologie

Furthermore, Zukunftsphilologie aims to support critical reviews of historical and philological practice. In revisiting important „philological wars“, the goal is not to merely evaluate the argumentative worth of these debates, but to reflect on the wider cultural and political context in which these „philological wars“ emerged and how they have shaped our knowledge of the past.

The project Zukunftsphilologie is co-directed by Angelika Neuwirth, Manan Ahmed and Islam Dayeh (all Freie Universität Berlin) and is associated with and located at the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School of Literary Studies at Freie Universität Berlin. Zukunftsphilologie is a project at the Forum Transregionale Studien.

## **Information**

[www.zukunftsphilologie.de](http://www.zukunftsphilologie.de)

[www.forum-transregionale-studien.de](http://www.forum-transregionale-studien.de)

[www.fsgs.fu-berlin.de/fsgs/kooperationen/Zukunftsphilologie](http://www.fsgs.fu-berlin.de/fsgs/kooperationen/Zukunftsphilologie)

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