

TOWARDS A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF LATE ANTIQUITY AND THE QURAN

The joint meeting of the QaSLA and LAESSI working groups invites scholars to explore the intricate transitions and cultural continuities that define the formative period of Quranic traditions and Early Islam within the context of its Late Antique environment. By situating the emergence of the Quran within the broader framework of Late Antiquity, this workshop seeks to bridge the gap between diverse religious traditions and philological disciplines.

The program focuses on the evolving representations of the Divine, tracing its complex shifts across Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian and Islamic contexts. Participants will further examine the Quran's engagement with its environment through the lens of poetry, the significance of loanwords within Quranic Arabic, and the creative adaptation of shared literary traditions. Beyond thematic analysis, the meeting also addresses the theoretical boundaries of the period, interpretations informed by perspectives from cultural theory and introduces innovative digital methods for the study of Christian Oriental philology.

By fostering a close collaboration between the Universities of Tübingen and Göttingen, this workshop aims to generate a more nuanced understanding of how religious knowledge was shared, contested, and preserved during this formative epoch.



VolkswagenStiftung



Funded by
the European Union



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

The workshop is funded by the European Research Council, as part of the QaSLA project, and the Volkswagen Stiftung as part of the LAESSI project.

Organizer: Falk Simmelbauer
f.simmelbauer@stud.uni-goettingen.de

Director:
Holger Zellentin
holger.Zellentin@uni-tuebingen.de
Jens Scheiner
jschein@uni-goettingen.de



QASLA AND LAESSI WORKING GROUP MEETING I:



The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus Discovered by Alexander the Great, Folio from a Falnama (1550s)

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Evangelisch-Theologie Fakultäten /Seminar für
Religionswissenschaft und Judaistik /
Institutum Judaicum (Tübingen)

Seminar für Arabistik / Islamwissenschaft
(Göttingen)

WORKSHOP TIMETABLE

26. MAY 2026

14:30–15:15 Arrival Coffee&Snack

15:15–15:30

Holger Zellentin (Tübingen)
& Jens Scheiner (Göttingen)
Welcome Address and Opening of the Workshop.

1st Session

(Chair: Falk Simmelbauer)

15:30–16:00

Jens Scheiner (Göttingen)
Zu Epochengrenzen der LAESSI-Epoche 300–930.

16:00–16:30

Sebastian Bitsch (Göttingen)
Im Spannungsfeld zwischen Anthropomorphismus und Transzendenz: Zum Wandel des zoroastrischen Gottesbildes in der Spätantike.

16:30–17:00 Coffee Break

17:00–17:30

Dimitrji Bumazhnov (Göttingen)
From Anthropomorphic Images of God to Negative Theology in Late Antique Religions. Some findings and issues.

17:30–18:00

Maxim Yosefi (Göttingen)
Representations of God in Jewish Sources of Late Antiquity: From Anthropomorphism to Transcendence.

18:30 Dinner

27. MAY 2026

2nd Session

(Chair: Ana Davitashvili)

9:00–09:30

Zahra Mohagheghian (Göttingen)
Masculine Transcendence, Feminine Desire: Allah and the Arabian Goddesses in Early Islamic Sources.

9:30–10:00

Tilman Schreinemacher (Göttingen)
Islam as a counter-religion? Jan Assmann's theory in light of the quran and al-jāhiliyya.

10:00–10:30

Nadja Abuhussein (Tübingen)
Poetry as a Medium of Religious Knowledge in 'Adī ibn Zayd al-'Ibādī.

10:30–11:00 Coffee break

3rd Session

(Chair: Dimitrji Bumazhnov)

11:00–11:30

Manolis Ulbricht (Tübingen & Göttingen)
Digitale Erschließungs- und Editionsmethoden in den Philologien des Christlichen Orients: vom Handschriftendigitalisat zur Digitalen Edition.

11:30–12:00

Holger Zellentin (Tübingen)

12:00–12:30

Ana Davitashvili (Tübingen)
Die "wandernde Legende" in der Spätantike: Von den christlichen Schläfern von Ephesus zu den Gefährten der Höhle in Ibn Ishāqs muḥtada'.

12:30–13:30 Lunch (on site)

4th Session

(Chair: Zahra Mohagheghian)

13:30–14:00

Raashid Goyal (Tübingen)

14:00–14:30

Stefanie Rudolf (Tübingen)
From the 'hump of a camel' to the 'share of mercy' – kīf and Ethiopic loanwords in qur'anic Arabic.

14:30 – 15:00

Final discussion and farewell address