

CALL FOR PAPERS

The production of material culture in the Islamic world: centers, craftsmen and techniques

21st Colloquium of the Ernst Herzfeld-Gesellschaft | Ernst Herzfeld Society

<https://ernst-herzfeld-gesellschaft.com>

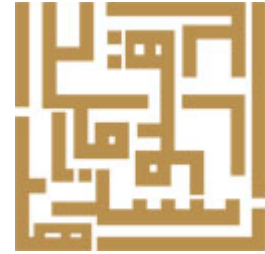
Goethe Universität Frankfurt, Frankfurt am Main (Germany)

July 2-4 2026

Material culture is a broad term, used to describe any object or feature made by human beings. Different disciplines approach material culture from different directions, ask different research questions and employ different sources and methods to answer them. While archaeologists and art historians were always interested in materiality and the flow of ideas, the ‘material turn’ of the last decade led to a growing interest in raw materials, recipes and production techniques. One of the possible results of this trend is the renewed interest in human agencies. In the case of past production, these agents were the craftsmen who acquired the knowledge, implied their innovations, and made everyday choices regarding raw materials, tools, production methods and the final product. These agents could include potters, book binders, glass blowers, dyers, ink producers, marble miners, architects or artists, among many others.

The EHG 21st colloquium aims to bring together scholars of various disciplines to discuss the Islamic world from a materiality perspective. Shifting the focus from consumers and patrons to craftsmen, their workshops and their ‘know how’ allows to foreground social and economic dynamics that often go unnoticed. The interdisciplinary discussion would enable a better understanding of such dynamics as well as establishing a fuller historical narrative for craftsmen.

We invite researchers from the fields of Islamic archaeology, Islamic architecture, Islamic art history and the contemporary arts as well as manuscript studies, museology, history, ethno-archaeology and archaeometry to submit a paper proposal. For an interesting interdisciplinary exchange, we encourage using non-technical language and providing an introduction to research methods and sources. The papers are planned to be published at *BIKA* ([Beiträge zur Islamischen Kunst und Archäologie](#)), and are expected to present mostly-unpublished ideas and/or research results.



The topics may include the following:

- Production of final objects (made of clay, glass, stone, bone, ivory, metal, wood, textile, etc.)
- Production of raw materials, incl. mines and quarries
- Workshops, professionals and techniques in architectural decorative elements, e.g. wall painting, stucco, mosaics, roofing
- Manuscript production, incl. illustrations and decorations, binding, paper and ink
- Theory on, e.g., the production of luxury goods, agency, or identifying production centers

In addition, abstracts could be sent outside of the main conference theme, presenting results of current research, for one panel at the colloquium.

Application

Applications for the Call for Papers should be sent to Mustafa Ahmad, [m.ahmad\[at\]em.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:m.ahmad[at]em.uni-frankfurt.de), not later than **25th November 2025**. This should include a title, a 200 to 250-word abstract, academic affiliation and contact details. Please note that the colloquium's language is English and abstracts are to be written in English.

All proposals will undergo a blind selection process by the committee. Acceptance will be notified by 30th December 2025.

Venue and schedule:

The Colloquium takes place at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main (Germany) and is organized by Hagit Nol.

Thursday 2nd July 2026

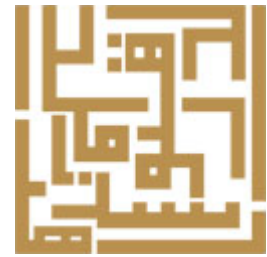
- Graduate student meeting
- Keynote lecture by Prof. Konrad Hirschler (Hamburg)
- Reception

Friday 3rd July 2026: Sessions

Saturday 4th July 2026:

- Sessions
- Annual general assembly of the Ernst Herzfeld Society

Sunday 5th July 2026: Excursion



Registration and other details

Registration for and participation at the EHG Colloquium are **free for members of the Society**. Other speakers are asked to join the Society by paying the annual membership fee (25/50 Euros for students/others). Please see: <https://ernst-herzfeld-gesellschaft.com/en/beitrittsformular/>

We would kindly request that speakers and participants make their own provisions for travel and accommodation. Speakers who require an invitation letter will be provided with it by request.

For applications and questions regarding **the graduate meeting** on July 2nd (in a separate Call for Papers), please contact Salma Azzam, [salma.azzam\[at\]univie.ac.at](mailto:salma.azzam[at]univie.ac.at).



Dalman, Gustaf, 1937. *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina, Band V: Webstoff, Spinnen, Weben, Kleidung*, Gütersloh: Der Rufer, Tübingen ed., 2013, Fig. 23. Public Domain.