



Prologues in Middle Eastern Manuscript Traditions: An Interdisciplinary Workshop

Dates and Venues:

April 15-16, 2027, **University of Salzburg**, Faculty of Catholic Theology, Department of Biblical Studies and Ecclesiastical History/Center for the Study of the Christian East (ZECO)

Conveners:

George A. Kiraz, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton

Sabine Schmidtke, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton

Yury Arzhanov, University of Salzburg

Titles and abstracts (750–1000 words) should be submitted by **January 1, 2027**, to Sabine Schmidtke at scs@ias.edu.

Scholars are expected to fund their travel to/from and accommodation in Salzburg. Meals will be provided. Speakers will be invited to contribute to a proceedings volume. All contributions will undergo a double-blind peer-review process.

IAS SCHOOL OF HISTORICAL STUDIES
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**UNIVERSITÄT
SALZBURG**

Center for the Study of the Christian East

This interdisciplinary workshop examines the prologue as a distinct textual and material space within Middle Eastern manuscript cultures — the threshold at which authors, scribes, translators, and patrons speak in their own voice before the main text begins. The event seeks to explore how prologues negotiate authority, intention, and audience, and how they shape the reception of the works they introduce.

Topics may include the rhetorical conventions of prologues (invocations, dedications, statements of purpose, *captatio benevolentiae*); prologues as sites of authorial and translatorial self-presentation; the relationship between prologues, colophons, and other paratexts; prologues added, altered, or omitted across copies and translations; the use of prologues to stake claims of “orthodoxy,” patronage, or lineage; comparative and cross-confessional approaches to introductory conventions; and the afterlife of prologues in print editions and modern scholarship.

This across-discipline workshop aims to cover manuscripts in various languages, including, but not limited to, (Judeo-)Arabic, Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopic, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, and (Judeo-)Persian, in addition to the ancient languages of Egypt and Mesopotamia. All time periods are of interest.

Our workshop series gives speakers ample time to present (30 to 45 minutes depending on submissions), as well as ample sessions of discussion (30 minutes each). The purpose is to provide a space where scholars can engage with each other and learn from different disciplines. Junior scholars are encouraged to submit.

For Middle Eastern Manuscript Traditions (**MEMaT**), a multidisciplinary project which aims at studying various aspects of manuscript production, utilization, and transmission history, see <https://www.ias.edu/hs/islamic-world/memat>.