



It is an exciting time to be thinking about Arabic book history, as many questions are now being re-framed and addressed in ways that speak to a wider field of scholarly investigation.

THE HISTORY OF THE ARABIC BOOK: A NEW CHAPTER

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These questions concern, for example, the arguably scant material evidence for books up until roughly the eleventh century C.E., the non-survival of books treating important topics, the great variability of witnesses to individual works, and the ways that recycling of parts of prior books operated across time and place. Such questions, which query the very nature of 'the book', are relevant for the first four Islamic centuries, but also for later periods. This jointly delivered lecture will present the KITAB project – a collaboration between historians and computer scientists that addresses these major questions. We have assembled a corpus of 1.7 billion words of Arabic texts, and are seeking specifically to understand transmission practices (ca. 700-1500), with a special focus on how authors recycled earlier works and how they cited their predecessors. Through this lecture, we hope to describe the frontiers of knowledge, the challenges and promises of our data, and what listeners themselves might now do with it. (KITAB is a European Research Council Consolidator Grant project funded under Horizon 2020 and also has received funding from the Qatar National Library and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.)

Register in advance for this webinar [here](#). After registering, you will receive an email containing information about joining the webinar.

Wednesday, February 3, 2021, 12:00 pm (EST)

Hosted by **Sabine Schmidtke** (School of Historical Studies, IAS) and **María Mercedes Tuya** (Digital Scholarship, IAS). For additional information send an email to ds@ias.edu.