

CALL FOR PAPERS: American and Muslim Worlds circa 1500-1900
Conference at the University of Pennsylvania, McNeil Center for Early American Studies
30 Mar – 1 Apr 2017

Keynote speakers: Denise Spellberg, author of *Thomas Jefferson's Quran: Islam and the Founders*; Sylviane Diouf, author of *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas*

Program Committee: Edward E. Curtis, Mehmet Darakcioglu, Mitch Fraas, Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, John Ghazvinian, Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, Timothy Marr, Daniel Richter, Heather Sharkey, Karine Walther

Long before the age of twentieth century geopolitics, the American and Muslim worlds informed, interacted, perplexed, inspired, confounded and imagined each other in ways far more numerous than is frequently thought. Whether through Salem traders in the East Indies, Ottoman consuls in Washington, orientalist themes in the work of Emerson, Morisco converts in Latin America, or the burial practices of enslaved Africans, there was no shortage of opportunities for Islam, Muslims and the inhabitants of the Americas to meet, interact and shape one another.

We invite proposals for a wide-ranging, interdisciplinary conference examining the interplay between American and Muslim worlds, circa 1500-1900, to be held at the University of Pennsylvania's McNeil Center for Early American Studies in the spring of 2017. Most papers will be pre-circulated via a password-protected website, accessible only to conference registrants, who will be expected to read them in advance.

We are intentionally leaving the term "American and Muslim worlds" open to the widest possible interpretations. Possible topics could include (but are not limited to):

- Islam and slavery in the Americas
- Islam and the founders
- Muslim immigration to the Americas
- American missionary activity as well as eschatological and other religious responses to the Muslim world
- Military conflicts (e.g., the Barbary wars)
- American orientalism
- Material culture (carpets, textiles, horses, irrigation, etc)
- Aesthetic forms
- Diplomatic and political history
- Trading networks
- Travel narratives

We envisage this conference as an intellectual platform bringing together scholars from the US and abroad, to consider the interweaving of American and Muslim worlds. We are particularly open to papers that consider Muslim responses to events that scholars in the Anglophone world have traditionally considered from "American" points of view (e.g., the US and the Barbary wars, missionary activity). We are also favorably disposed to papers that disrupt the idea of American and Muslim worlds as two separate and non-overlapping entities. Finally, we are keen to attract papers that conceive of the Muslim world as something more than just the Middle East (for example, papers that deal with the Ottoman Balkans; Central, South and Southeast Asia; West Africa).

Confirmed participants include Jacob Berman, Karoline Cook, Michael C. Hawkins, Paul Lovejoy, Ussama Makdisi, Bethel Saler, and Malini Johar Schueller. The conference will feature an opening plenary with presentations from senior scholars, and discussion-intensive panels of research in progress, with plenary speakers serving as discussants. The forum will also feature a public exhibit at the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts at Penn's Van Pelt Library.

Some support for travel and lodging expenses will be available to conference presenters.

Papers of approximately 7,500 words will be due for precirculation no later than 3 February 2017. To be considered, please send an abstract of 250-300 words, along with a one-page CV, to mceas@ccat.sas.upenn.edu no later than 16 May 2016. Decisions will be made during summer 2016.