

Forthcoming

Survey of Islamic Studies in Germany

Islamic World / General

EKKEHARD RUDOLPH

In 1996 the *Institute for Advanced Study* (Wissenschaftskolleg) in Berlin launched the initiative to survey contemporary German research on Islam and Muslim societies, past and present.

The project emerged from the discussions of the *Working Group Modernity and Islam*, uniting scholars mostly from the two Berlin universities (Freie and Humboldt University), the *German Orient Institute* (Deutsches Orient-Institut) in Hamburg, and fellow researchers from Islamic countries.

The survey is generally intended to analyse the state of the art in all studies on the Middle East and the whole Islamic world at German universities and outside research institutions. Supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science (BMBF) the survey had to identify the crucial problems and lacunae in the content and structure of relevant research. Finally it was to put forward precise recommendations to the responsible bodies of the German Länder (states) and the Federal Government as a means to strengthen its future promotion.

The ambitious study was executed during 1997 as a project of the German Orient Institute in Hamburg. Questionnaires of more than 300 scholars and researchers at about 60 institutions were analysed, forming the nucleus of the survey. In addition, the project coordinator conducted personal interviews with a number of scholars to gain a vivid picture of the current situation.

By summarizing all related topics of research, including both historical and textual studies, as well as sociological contributions (for example on migration and European Islam), the project surpassed former surveys which merely pointed either to historical or contemporary research (cf. *Denkschrift Orien-*

talistik, Wiesbaden 1960; *Gegenwartsbezogene Orientforschung in Deutschland*, Göttingen 1974).

This comprehensive approach pays tribute to the growing mergence of social and cultural sciences in regard to methodology. This tendency can best be illustrated by several multi-lateral research projects on the transformation of societies in their turn towards modernity in different parts of the Islamic world (cf. Graduate Colleges, Collaborative Research Centres). The relevance of the interdisciplinary research to comparative studies in international and intercultural relations needs to be further emphasized.

The first part of the draft study is an overview of the main subjects of research in the study of languages, literature, history and religion in the Islamic world as well as in regional geography, anthropology, political and economic sciences. The second part in the study is aimed at the institutional structures of research in Germany including the situation and development of academic staff. Subsequent chapters are devoted to a description of German scientific societies, special libraries and documentation services, and last but not least to the funding of research and the perspectives of international cooperation. The annex provides detailed information about relevant institutions, scholars, addresses, special publications and periodicals.

Following a series of consultations and discussions over recent months, the survey will be published before long.

Dr Ekkehard Rudolph is coordinator of the Islamic Studies Project, Hamburg.

*For information please contact:
Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin
Arbeitskreis Moderne und Islam
Fax: +49-30-89001-200
e-mail: meiering@wiko-berlin.de*