

Habilitation Dr. Stefan Schroeder

**World Knowledge and Cartographic Representation. Transcultural entanglements between Arab-Islamic and Latin-Christian cartography in the Middle Ages, Habilitationsschrift, University of Kassel 2022.**

This interdisciplinary project, initially funded by the DFG-Schwerpunktprogramm “Integration und Desintegration der Kulturen im europäischen Mittelalter” from 2007 to 2011, investigated the exchange of knowledge between Arabic-Islamic and Latin-Christian cartographical representations. While for instance the impact of knowledge from the Islamic world in the fields of astronomy, medicine and philosophy is well known, previous research regarding the influence of Arabic-Islamic geography and cartography has come to contradictory results that reflect not only different academic but also ideological views. The spectrum reaches from the extreme that the development of modern cartography in the late Middle Ages was not possible without using Arabic-Islamic proficiency including maps to viewpoints that deny a transcultural influence and explain cartographical changes basically with internal factors of the Latin-Christian world.

Revisiting and revising the results of previous research, the project has analysed the ways, conditions and contents of the transfer of cartographic knowledge. It dealt with the interrelations between Arabic-Islamic maps and selected European counterparts – world and regional maps as well as Portolan Charts – roughly from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In analysing the different contact situations and following the transformation of knowledge within the manuscript traditions of related texts, the project challenged the dichotomy of a ‘Christian West’ and ‘Islamic East’ and studied how geographical and cultural knowledge has been used and re-functionalised, how it affected conceptions of space and established knowledge systems.

Following the results of the ‘spatial’ and ‘cartographical turn’, the project understands maps as socially produced artefacts that not solely depict the physical world based on available knowledge at the time, but as a medium that constructs geographical and cultural spaces, that seeks to challenge and influence the spectator’s worldviews. In showing the complex interaction of the mapmakers and their products beyond cultural borders, the project contributes to current social and academic debates on the heritage of a multi-religious Europe. In this way, it aims to be a considerable contribution in the field of Muslim-Christian relations in terms of cultural and scientific exchange.

The manuscript with the final results has been completed in 2021 and is currently being prepared for publication.