

Visiting Speaker Series

The Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies is
pleased to present a talk by esteemed academic

Professor Christian Lange, Utrecht University

*"What no eye has seen: The Development of
Early Muslim Literature on Paradise and Hell"*

Wednesday, 8 February 2017, 5.15 pm

LT1, IAIS Building, Streatham Campus, Exeter EX4 4ND

Tea & Coffee to be served from 4.30 pm in the Common Room,
Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies.

All are welcome – no registration required.



In this talk, I provide, first an overview of the Muslim literature about paradise and hell up to ca 250 AH. To illustrate the broad development that this literature underwent, I then zoom in on the well-known 'divine saying' (hadith qudsī) that "I have prepared for my servants [in paradise] that which no eye has seen, no ear has heard and no mind has conceived". This is a tradition that has deep roots in the Judeo-Christian literature of Late Antiquity. The Qur'an seems aware of it, but does not quote it. The first appearance in Muslim literature comes in the Scroll (ṣahīfa) of the Yemeni

traditionist, Hammām b. Munabbih (d. 131/749 or 132/750). From there, the saying undergoes a series of fascinating transformations and ends up (in various shapes) in the canonical collections. I discuss the theological content and implications of the various versions of the saying and then back up my thoughts with an analysis of the chains of transmitters (isnāds) that support these versions.

Christian Lange (PhD Harvard, 2006) holds the Chair of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Utrecht.