

# Bonner Querschnitte

## Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

Phone: +49 4106 804806 • Fax: +49 4106 804807  
Email: [info@bonn-profiles.net](mailto:info@bonn-profiles.net) • <https://bonn-profiles.net/>

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## BQ 824 – No. 04/2025

# Muslim feminists base their equality arguments on the Qur'an

## Christine Schirmacher presents a summary of her presentation at the Bavarian Orient Colloquium

(Bonn, 13.01.2025) "My Pen – My History: Feminist Middle Eastern Discourses on the Right to Vote, on Equality Rights and on a Gender-Equitable Exegesis of the Quran in the 19th and 20th Centuries" was the topic of the presentation by Bonn Professor of Islamic Studies Christine Schirmacher at the Bavarian Oriental Colloquium. The Bavarian Oriental Colloquium is a joint initiative of institutes at the universities of Erlangen-Nuremberg and Bamberg, as well as the Centre for Euro-Oriental Studies (Bamberg), the Chair of Oriental Philology and Islamic Studies, the Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg and all Oriental faculties at the Otto-Friedrich-University, Bamberg. The topic was developed by the inviting professor, Prof. Dr. Georges Tamer, Professor of Oriental Philology and Islamic Studies and Director of the Bavarian Research Center for Interreligious Discourses (BaFID) at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg.

The speaker, Prof. Dr. Christine Schirmacher, is now providing the following summary of her presentation:

A first wave of feminism in the Middle East developed in the wake of the emergence of so-called reformist Islam at the end of the 19th century as a reaction to European colonization and the advance of Western culture in the MENA region. Along with this, the increase in educational opportunities for women, the flourishing of film, literature and art, and the emergence of new movements and parties led to a changed awareness of women's rights. Hand in hand with this, an upper-class women's movement developed (partly with the participation of European women), which actively opposed European colonial rule and campaigned for the national independence of their home

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### Text & Technology:

Titus Vogt (ViSdP)  
Vorderer Kamp 52a, 25479 Ellerau  
Tel.: +49 / 4106 / 80 48 06  
Fax: +49 / 4106 / 80 48 07  
E-Mail: [info@bonn-profiles.net](mailto:info@bonn-profiles.net)



A joint platform for the following Bonn organizations on the basis of the Evangelical Alliance:

Bonn Abrahamic Center for Global Justice, Peace and Sustainability

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Evangelical Missiology, Journal of missiopot – Evangelical Forum for Missions, Cultures and Religions (German Evangelical Alliance) [missiopot.org](http://missiopot.org)

Evangelical Review of Theology (New York, Bonn) [theology.worlddea.org/evangelical-review-of-theology](http://theology.worlddea.org/evangelical-review-of-theology)

Giving Hands – International Charity (Bonn) [gebende-haende.de](http://gebende-haende.de)

Institut für Islamfragen der Deutschen, Schweizer und Österreichischen Allianz (IfI) [islaminstitut.de](http://islaminstitut.de)

International Institute for Islamic Studies (IIS) (Bonn) [islamistitute.net](http://islamistitute.net)

International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF) (Bonn, Vancouver, San José – Costa Rica) [iirf.global](http://iirf.global)

International Journal for Religious Freedom (IJRF) (Bonn/Toronto) [ijrf.org](http://ijrf.org)

International Secretariat of the International Society for Human Rights (ISHR) [ishr.org](http://ishr.org)

Islam and Christianity [journal.islamistitute.net](http://journal.islamistitute.net)

Martin Bucer Seminary (Bonn, Zürich, Tirana, São Paulo, Helsinki, Istanbul, Delhi) [bucer.org](http://bucer.org)

SOS World (Brussels) [sosworld.be/page-daccueil](http://sosworld.be/page-daccueil)

Theological Commission of the European Evangelical Alliance [europeanea.org](http://europeanea.org)

Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft (VKW) (Culture and Science Publ.) [vkwonline.com](http://vkwonline.com)

WEA book series: Global Issues Series / World of Theology Series [theology.worlddea.org/global-issues](http://theology.worlddea.org/global-issues)  
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WEA Sustainability Center [wea-sc.org](http://wea-sc.org)

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countries. This first wave of feminism from the end of the 19th and early 20th century was mainly secular and advocated in particular for women's suffrage, the right to pursue a profession, expanded educational opportunities, a ban on polygamy and improved divorce laws for women.

The second wave of feminist movements in the MENA region from the 1970s onwards was primarily a counter-movement to the rise of Islamism, whose opinion leaders propagated significant restrictions on women's rights with an extremely traditionalist understanding of women's roles in society. Feminists now mainly refer to religious texts to justify women's equality. A male-dominated, traditional Quran hermeneutics is rejected, but the verbal inspiration of the Quran is upheld. Accordingly, feminist Quran exegesis of the 20th and 21st centuries must be described as progressive, but by no means as liberal.



Prof. Dr. Georges Tamer, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, moderator of the Bavarian Orient Colloquium, introduces Prof. Dr. Christine Schirmacher  
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### Downloads and Links:

- **Photo:** Prof. Dr. Georges Tamer, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, moderator of the Bavarian Orient Colloquium, introduces Prof. Dr. Christine Schirmacher © Andreas Knöll
- The invitation to the event: [https://bonner-querschnitte.de/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2021\\_2022\\_Orientkolloquium.pdf](https://bonner-querschnitte.de/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2021_2022_Orientkolloquium.pdf)

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