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- [HBKU'S College of Islamic Studies Lecture Considers Key Islamic Text in Eurasian Context](#)

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Public event places Blue Qur'an within context of other religious manuscripts



The College of Islamic Studies (CIS) at Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) recently hosted The Blue Qur'an in its Eurasian Context, a public event which considered the importance of this key manuscript beyond the Islamic world.

The lecture was presented by Dr. Alain Fouad George, I.M. Pei Professor of Islamic Art and Architecture, University of Oxford, who explored the date and origin of the Blue Qur'an within the context of other Qur'anic manuscripts and Muslim religious architecture. Dr. George also expanded the scope of his discussion by considering the manuscript's synergies with Byzantine Bibles and Chinese Buddhist sutras.

Speaking after the event, Dr. M. Tarek Swelim, program coordinator for CIS's MSc in Islamic Art, Architecture and Urbanism program, said: "While the Blue Qur'an has been the subject of extensive scholarly debate, there is still much to be learned regarding the extraordinary significance of this Islamic manuscript. Dr. George's presence at HBKU demonstrates that CIS aims at contemporary discussions and other intellectual debates regarding Islam through a cross examination of the history, geography, and visual identity of one of the most iconic records of the Qur'an we have to-date."

Dr. George's visit is a part of the program's collaboration with the University of Oxford, which facilitates faculty exchange in an effort to enrich student learning in this field. Dr. George said: "With the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA), Qatar National Library (QNL), and this specialized program at HBKU, which plugs into a local ecosystem of university-level teaching in related fields, Doha is fast becoming an international center for the study of Islamic art. Our collaboration with these institutions is a valued part of the activities of the Khalili Research Centre at the University of Oxford. Those interested might also get the chance, in coming months, to see in person folios from the famous Blue Qur'an displayed in the collections of MIA and QNL."

The College of Islamic Studies regularly hosts public lectures and conferences to promote a deeper understanding of the various aspects of Islam among the wider community. As part of the college's ongoing collaboration with the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) in Doha, Dr. Swelim will be delivering a series of lectures at the MIA on Lost Ancient and Islamic Cities on September 11, October 2, and October 9, examining cities such as Alexandria, Antinopolis, and the Lost City of Fustat.

For more information about CIS' upcoming events, please visit cis.hbku.edu.qa

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