

Dr. Alba Fedeli



Projektleiterin / Principal Investigator

InterSaMe project

Anschrift

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My work primarily focuses on early Qur'anic manuscripts dating from the 7th century CE. My interest in Qur'anic manuscripts began while I was cooperating in publishing manuscript facsimiles with my late mentor, [Sergio Noja Nosedá](#), in Italy. Since then, I have had the chance to gain first-hand knowledge of collections of these fragments scattered all over the world, from Yemen to Ireland, from Russia to Qatar, Turkey and Egypt. After my undergraduate studies in Classical Philology and Arabic at the University of Milan, I was appointed as librarian and director of the Noja Nosedá Foundation for Arabic and Islamic Studies from 2000 to 2008. As director of the Ferni Noja Nosedá Foundation, I took part in activities as diverse as displaying printed books at the International Exhibition of the Qur'an in Tehran, organizing events as part of the Italian-Egyptian cooperation for Comparative Studies in Cairo, and the digitization project of the Sana'a palimpsest (MSS DaM 01-27.1) and other manuscripts that I selected (DaM 01-29.1 and DaM 01-25.1).

During my doctoral research at the [University of Birmingham](#) from 2011 to 2015, I highlighted the value of the so-called Birmingham Qur'an and the unexplored story of the Mingana collection, being involved in the media frenzy after the [BBC announcement](#) that the "Birmingham Qur'an" manuscript dates to Muhammad's lifetime. During my stay at the University of Birmingham, I developed my digital humanities knowledge in terms of the post-processing of digital images for the virtual reconstruction of palimpsest manuscripts, the digital editing of texts using the TEI system and encoding for phylogenetic analysis in grouping manuscripts that I continued as a Research Fellow in Budapest, at the Central European University. From my interest in Qur'anic manuscripts, the research project on the [Mingana-Lewis palimpsest](#) emerged bringing to light its hidden story, leaves and texts.

I was a research fellow at the Centre for Religious Studies, CEU, in Budapest and at the John Rylands Research Institute in Manchester from 2015 to 2017 and at FSCIRE Foundation for Religious Studies from 2017 to 2018.

Since 2018, I am a Research Associate at the Asia Afrika Institut where I am the co-PI of [InterSaME project](#), 'The intertwined world of the oral and written transmission of sacred traditions in the Middle East'. It is a DFG-AHRC joint project in co-operation with [Geoffrey Khan](#) at the University of Cambridge.

Academic Positions

Oct 2018 to date. Research Associate at Asien-Afrika-Institut, Universität Hamburg

Feb 2018 – Aug 2019. Research Fellow, Institute for Textual Scholarship and Electronic Editing, University of Birmingham, UK (Codex Zacynthius Project)

Oct 2017 – Sept 2018. Senior Research Fellow, FSCIRE (Foundation for Religious Studies), Bologna, Italy

Jun 2017 – Oct 2018. Consultant for the Christian Arabic collection of the Museum of the Bible, Oklahoma City

Sept 2015 – Sept 2017. Researcher at Center for Religious Studies, Central European University, Budapest

Mar 2015. Instructor of Arabic Culture, Università Statale di Milano

Oct – Nov 2008. Consultant for the cataloguing and conservation project of the new findings of the Great Mosque of Sanaa, Yemen

Oct 2004 – Jun 2012. Adjunct Professor of Arabic, Università Statale di Milano

Apr 2003 – Jan 2008. Director of Ferni Noja Nosedà Foundation for Islamic Arabic Studies, Lesa, Italy

Education and Academic Degrees

2015. PhD, University of Birmingham, UK. Thesis: Early Qur'ānic manuscripts, their text, and the Alphonse Mingana papers, held in the Department of Special Collections of the University of Birmingham

2000. Diploma di Laurea (MA) in Classical Philology. Università Cattolica di Milano, Italy

Fellowships, Honorary Fellowships, and Grants

Mar 2020 – Feb 2023. DFG-AHRC project: [The Intertwined World of the Oral and Written Transmission of Sacred Traditions in the Middle East \(InterSaME\)](#), joint project with University of Cambridge (co-P.I.: Geoffrey Khan)

Jun – Sept 2015. Research Fellow at [John Rylands Research Institute](#), Manchester UK: A reading of the Qur'ānic Manuscripts of the John Rylands University Library

Apr 2015 to date. [Honorary Research Fellow of the Institute for Textual Scholarship and Electronic Editing](#), University of Birmingham, UK

Sept 2012 – Aug 2014. PhD Scholarship, Arts and Humanities Research Council, University of Birmingham (UK)

2010 – 2011, The Islamic Manuscript Association Research Grant for the Project [The enhancement of the Mingana-Lewis palimpsest \(CUL Or. 1287\): reading between the lines of its post-processed images](#), Cambridge University Library

2009 – 2010. The Islamic Manuscript Association Research Grant for the Project [Digitization of the Mingana-Lewis palimpsest, Cambridge University Library](#), Cambridge University Library

Feb – Mar 2010. Visiting Fellowship: [Ancient Arabia \(from the 1st Millennium BCE to the Emergence of Islam\) and its Relations with the Surrounding Cultures](#), Institute of Advanced Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Organization of International Conferences, Membership in Steering and Programming Committees

2019 to date, Head of the [Nominating Committee of the International Qur'anic Studies Association](#)

2019 to date, Member of the Series Editorial Board of ["Library of Arabic and Islamic Heritage"](#) by Gorgias Press and King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies

2019 to date, Member of the Series Editorial Board of "Texts and Studies" by Gorgias Press

2019 to date, Member of the [Advisory Scientific Committee of the Alta Scuola Europea di Scienze Religiose "Giuseppe Alberigo"](#) (Bologna)

2016 to date, Co-chairing the Research Unit Programming about The Qur'an: Manuscripts and Textual Criticism of the International Qur'anic Studies Association with Shady Nasser (and the late Keith Small)

2016 to date, Co-chairing the five-year Research Programme [Textual Criticism of the New Testament, the Old Testament and the Qur'an](#) of the European Association of Biblical Studies with Theodora Panella

Mar 2018, Organization of the panel conference In memoriam Sergio Noja: an Arabist per accidens, within the annual conference of the European Academy of Religion, Bologna

May 2017, Organization of the Conference Paleo-Qur'anic Manuscripts: State of the Field, Central European University, Budapest

2015 – 2018, Assistente Accademico of [Arabic Studies Section, Ambrosiana Academy and Library](#), Milan

2015 – 2017, Member of the Nominating Committee of the [International Qur'anic Studies Association](#)

PhD Projects

Rami El-Halaseh, 'The Problem of Multiple qira'at in the Topkapi Qur'an Manuscript', (University of St Andrews, co-supervisor)

Alba publications

- Digital Humanities and Qur'anic Manuscript Studies: New perspectives and Challenges for collaborative space and pluralism of views", in Proceedings of the Conference on "Contemporary Western Trends in Qur'anic Studies. The Problem of Objectivity and Bias: An Epistemological Perspective", Qatar University, College of Shariaa and Islamic Studies, Doha, forthcoming.
- 'Isolated Qur'anic fragments: the case of the three papyri from the Mingana Collection', in Hilali, A. ed., Proceedings of the Conference 'Fragmentation and Compilation. The Making of Religious Texts in Islam', London, Institute for Ismaili Studies, forthcoming.
- 'Editing and analysing the evidence of the early Qur'anic copies: digital philology and phylogenetic networks', in Hilali, A. & Burge S. eds., Contemporary Qur'anic Studies, forthcoming.
- 'Dating early Qur'anic manuscripts: reading the objects, their texts and the results of their material analysis' in Dye, G. ed., Proceedings of the Seminar 'Early Islam: The Sectarian Milieu of Late Antiquity?', forthcoming.
- 'Manuscript acquisitions and their later movements: a further note about the case of the Lewis Qur'anic manuscript' in Rauch, C. & Liebrecht, B. eds., Manuscripts, Politics and Oriental Studies. Proceeding of the Wetzstein Conference at Berlin State Library, forthcoming.
- 'Avrupa'da Kuran el yazmaları çalışmaları: Erken dönem eser ve metinlerine erişim üzerine tarihsel bir inceleme', [i.e. Qur'anic manuscript studies in Europe: a historical survey of accessing early artefacts and texts], in Kuramer Konferanslar Kitabı, Kuramer Institute, Istanbul, forthcoming.
- 'Datation des témoins matériels anciens : les manuscrits coraniques non datés', in M. A. Amir-Moezzi and G. Dye eds., Le Coran des historiens, éditions du Cerf, forthcoming.
- 'Early Qur'anic Manuscripts and their Networks: a Phylogenetic Analysis project', co-written with Andrew Edmondson (ITSEE, Birmingham) for the Conference "Qur'anic Manuscript Studies: State of the Field", (held in Budapest, May 2017).
- 2015, 'Early Qur'anic manuscripts, their text, and the Alphonse Mingana papers held in the Department of Special Collections of the University of Birmingham', PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, Birmingham.
- 2015, 'Early Qur'anic manuscripts, caption of MS John Rylands Arabic 11', in Hodgson, J.R. ed., Riches of the Rylands: The Special Collections of the University of Manchester Library. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 171.
- 2014, 'The Kufic collection of the Prussian consul Wetzstein: The 1100 leaves of the Universitätsbibliothek in Tübingen and their importance for palaeography and Koranic criticism', in Kerr, R.M. and Milo, T. eds., Writings and Writing.

Investigations in Islamic Text and Script in honour of Januarius Justus Witkam. Cambridge: Archetype Press, pp. 117 – 142.

- 2012, 'Variants and substantiated qirā'āt: a few notes exploring their fluidity in the oldest Qur'ānic manuscripts', in Groß, M. & Ohlig, K.H. eds., *Die Entstehung einer Weltreligion II*. Berlin: Verlag Hans Schiler, pp. 403 – 440.
- 2011, 'The provenance of the manuscript Mingana Islamic Arabic 1572: dispersed folios from a few Qur'ānic quires', *Manuscripta Orientalia*, 17,1, pp. 45 - 56.
- 2011, 'The digitization project of the Qur'ānic palimpsest, MS Cambridge University Library Or. 1287, and the verification of the Mingana-Lewis edition: where is salām?', *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts*, 2,1, pp. 100-117.
- 2010, Review of 'François Déroche, *La transmission écrite du Coran dans les débuts de l'Islam. Le codex Parisino-petropolitanus*. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2009', *Bulletin d'Études Orientales*, 59, pp. 149-157.
- 2009, 'Relevance of the oldest Qur'ānic manuscripts for the readings mentioned by commentaries. A note on sura Ṭā-Hā', *Manuscripta Orientalia*, 15,1, pp. 3-10.
- 2008, 'I manoscritti di Sanaa: fogli sparsi che diventano Corani' [i.e. Sana'a manuscripts: scattered leaves that become Qur'āns], in Aspesi, F., Brugnattelli, V., Callow, A.L. & Rosenzweig C., eds., *Il mio cuore è a Oriente. Studi di linguistica storica, filologica e cultura ebraica dedicati a Maria Luisa Mayer* Modena. Milano: Cisalpino, Quaderni di Acme, 101, pp. 25-48.
- 2007, 'Lingua e scrittura del Corano: gli inizi' [i.e. Language and script of the Qur'ān: the beginnings], Guardi, J. ed., *Vedi alla voce: lingua araba. Elementi di linguistica per lo studio e la conoscenza dell'arabo* (Introduction by Versteegh, K.). Milano: A Oriente!, pp. 17-53.
- 2005, 'Mingana and the manuscript of Mrs. Agnes Smith Lewis, one century later', *Manuscripta Orientalia*, 11,3, pp. 3 - 7.
- 2005, 'Early evidences of variant readings in Qur'ānic manuscripts', in Ohlig, K.H. & Puin, G.R. eds., *Die dunklen Anfänge. Neue Forschungen zur Entstehung und frühen Geschichte des Islam*. Berlin: Verlag Hans Schiler, pp.293-316. Republished in Ohlig, K.H. & Puin, G.R. eds., *The Hidden Origins of Islam. New Research into its early History*. New York: Prometheus Books, 2010, pp. 311-334.
- 2005, 'A.Perg.2: a non palimpsest and its corrections', *Manuscripta Orientalia*, 11,1, pp. 20-27.
- 2003, 'Il frammento superstite dell'opera di Barqānī (m.425e. – 1034 a.D.) al-taḥrīg li-ṣaḥīḥ al-ḥadīṡ' [i.e. The extant fragment of the work of al-Barqānī (d.425/1034) al-taḥrīg li-ṣaḥīḥ al-ḥadīṡ], *Rendiconti dell'Istituto Lombardo, Classe di Scienze e Lettere*, 137, pp. 3-41.

Web-based editions and publications

- 2018, 'Collective Enthusiasm and the Cautious Scholar: The Birmingham Qur'ān', in *Origin Stories: A Forum on the "Discovery" and Interpretation of First-Millennium Manuscripts*, online forum in *Marginalia Review of Books* (<https://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/collective-enthusiasm/>)

- 2016, Digital Edition of MS CUL Or 1287: processed images showing hypothetical retracement of the scriptio inferior of the palimpsest and digital edition of its Qur'ānic text furnished of editorial notes (large leaves and small leaves in <http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/minganalewis>)
- 2016, 'Cambridge Digital Palimpsest - A Model by Alba Fedeli', in Coran et Sciences de l'Homme Website, 1 September 2016 (<http://www.mehdi-azaiez.org/Cambridge-Digital-Palimpsest-A-Model-by-Alba-Fedeli?lang=fr>)
- 2016, 'Interpreting the Qur'ānic leaves through their digital images: a hypothetical retracement', in Cambridge University Library Special Collections Blogs (<https://specialcollections.blog.lib.cam.ac.uk/?p=12005>), accompanied by a video showing the movement of the palimpsest layers (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7TXGs0f9IA>)
- 2013, 'The Qur'anic Manuscripts of the Mingana Collection and their Electronic Edition', in IQSA website online article posted on 18 March, (<http://iqsaweb.wordpress.com/2013/03/18/qmmc/>)