



## Invitation - Project meeting "Modern India in German Archives"

Thursday, 5 November 2015, 5 pm

### Scholarly Interlopers? German Indologists, British India and Colonial Knowledge: Using German university archives to study modern Indian history

Lecture by **Dr. Indra Sengupta**

#### Venue

Zentrum Moderner Orient  
Kirchweg 33

14129 Berlin

German scholars of India were a visible presence in colonial India, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century until, with the outbreak of the First World War, they were declared enemies and interned. Many served the colonial government of India in its education service. Others increasingly towards the end of the century and in the years leading to the First World War travelled to India on research and study trips. They played an ambiguous role in the production and dissemination of colonial knowledge: on the one hand they were clearly a part of the process of knowledge production in colonial India; on the other, they were also – often critical – observers of the way in which the British conducted themselves as India's rulers. At the same time, even as they aided colonial knowledge production, they became the conduits for the supply of information and artefacts from India for various institutions in Germany, and thus were instrumental in producing a knowledge that did not on the face of it conform to the analytical category of colonial power relations that is central to discussions of colonial knowledge.

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In this talk Indra Sengupta will examine the importance of sources in German university – and to a degree, – state archives in piecing together these complex roles of German Indologists who worked in or travelled to India in the nineteenth century. While sources in British-colonial archives on India make repeated references to German scholars in India, German university and state archives provide more detailed information on how these knowledge producers of India were instrumental in producing a parallel field of knowledge about India in a non-colonial context.

**DFG**

**Indra Sengupta** is Academic Coordinator of the Transnational Research Group **Poverty Reduction and Policy for the Poor between the State and Private Actors: Education Policy in India since the Nineteenth Century** at the German Historical Institute London. She holds a PhD in History from Heidelberg University. Her research interests include the production and practice of knowledge on India in colonial India and Europe, German Orientalism, and the practices of historical preservation in colonial India. Her current research is on history and heritage in colonial India as part of a global process of heritage-making in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

She is the author of "From Salon to Discipline: State, University and Indology in Germany, 1821–1914" (Heidelberg, 2005). She also edited, jointly with Daud Ali "Knowledge Production, Pedagogy, and Institutions in Colonial India" (New York, 2011).