

# MONDAY LECTURES | SOSE 2025/26

## IN RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES

RESEARCH BUILDING "WELTBEZIEHUNGEN" | C19.00.02/03 | 16:15 - 17:45

**08.12.2025 | SARAH WHEAT**

### **A FACTORY IN THE STYLE OF A MOSQUE: THE YENIDZE AND THE PARADOXES OF GERMAN ORIENTALISM**

Visitors to the city of Dresden are often surprised, when taking in the skyline from the banks of the Elbe River, to see a prominent minaret and bulbous glass dome just west of the historic old city. Recognizable to non-specialists as related to Islamic architectural elements, they stand in striking contrast to the Baroque and neo-Renaissance forms of the Frauenkirche, Residenzschloss, and Semperoper. Known locally as the Tabakmoschee (Tobacco Mosque), the Yenidze Tobacco Factory, completed in 1909, is a striking monument to German Orientalism, Dresden's industrial heritage, and broader histories of architecture as advertisement.

This presentation will explore how the Yenidze's exterior drew on forms from fourteenth and fifteenth century Mamluk funerary architecture to appeal to early twentieth century German tobacco consumers. Although the design likely references specific monuments in Cairo, the Yenidze was both marketed and perceived by the public as "a factory in the style of a mosque." I will show how the factory's dome and minaret-like chimneys activate a visual shorthand that continues to stand in for European imaginaries of the "Orient." I will argue that the Yenidze should be understood in relation to contemporary architectural experiments like Peter Behrens' AEG Turbine Hall in Berlin, completed the same year. While the AEG has been canonized as a "temple of work" and a landmark of modernist design, the relatively unknown example of the Yenidze similarly employed cutting-edge construction technologies and integrated a total branding strategy into its architectural form. Discourse surrounding both factories mobilized religious imagery to dignify industrial labor and modern production. Yet the Yenidze's invocation of Islamic architecture also provoked ambivalent responses in Wilhelmine Germany, generating anxieties around foreignness, gender, morality, and mechanized labor. By analyzing the building's form, reception, and representational strategies, this talk examines the paradoxes of German Orientalism and the role of architecture in shaping early twentieth-century consumer culture.



**ORGANIZED BY SEMINAR FÜR RELIGIONSWISSENSCHAFT.**

**ALL GUESTS WELCOME.  
NO REGISTRATION NECESSARY.**



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