The phrase 'narratology' was shaped in 1969 by Tzvedan Todorov in the 'Grammaire du Décameron', where he defined it as the 'science of the tale': "cet ouvrage relève d'une science qui n'exciste pas encore, disons la NARRATOLOGIE, la science du récit."

If we want to classify narrative analyses in the canon of disciplinary methods, such as those of the historical sciences and Islamic studies, it is important to define what this analysis means precisely, what it includes and what it does not. The problem however lies exactly here, already as the ideas and concepts of this kind of analysis are very vague and heterogeneous. Therefore it is difficult to describe the narratological analysis in terms of certain models and methodological steps (which do not really exist yet). Fortunately, some suitable and possible ideas were given in 2004 by Peter Wenzel in a chapter of his book called 'tool-kit'. Since then, and only very slowly, some lists of analytical questions have been formulated. The reason for this might be an uncertain understanding of the methods, but is also formed by "latent hostility against the concrete use of methods" within the field of literature studies.

This kind of difficulty is not nearly so apparent in the field exegetical studies. Sönke Finnern's recent and groundbreaking study filled this gap within the field of research and it can be therefore certainly seen as pioneer contribution within in this field. For the first time, Finnern presents a set of detailed instructions for the analysis of narratives by using the main theories of this field of research in a combined way. Based on Finnern's excellent study, I will therefore present now a short overview of the current narratologies in literature studies and show in what ways they are used in the field of exegetical studies, to underline the impressive possibilities of such a narratological investigation for cultural-historical studies, respectively for the field of Islamic studies and it's sources.

This field of research including narratological investigations changes all the time and especially during the last few years, it has increased exceptionally. Therefore we cannot reduce it to certain schools, such as the French structuralists of the years between 1966-1972, because this would oversimplify the current state of affairs. Unfortunately, there is still no overall presentation of the state of the art. Following Finnern's argumentation, I will therefore focus on the actual tendencies within this field of research, instead of presenting the development of different narratologies.

Narratology can be seen as a subject area, but also as a theory construction within a discipline. Nevertheless, it is important to point out, that for concrete analysis and even for methods, no specific phrase can be indicated. Therefore, next to the title of Finnern's study ("Narratologie und [...]"), Finnern also could have titled his work a "A Narrative Analysis of [...]" or an "Analysis of the [...]". (26) 

Besides these different possibilities, we still can use the following definition of narratology: "Narratology is the science of narrative." (29) Accepting this, we need additionally to define exactly what a narrative is. Brian Richardson presents us a with a meaningful working hypothesis: "[A] narrative is a representation of causally related series of events." [ 6 ] Having cleared this, it is necessary to mention very briefly some important lines of the development within current narratology.

Since the mid-90's there has been a Renaissance, even a boom in narratology. (33) Nearly all active narratologists agree that their work now goes far beyond the classical structualists approaches. Nevertheless, this does not mean that all former narratological methods have been totally abandoned, they have rather been modified and newly interpreted. Therefore, the term of the 'post classical' or 'post structuralist' theory is not very effective (beside the fact that they have already been used) and is a more makeshift solution.

Certainly the key aspect of narratology nowadays is its 'intermediacy,' meaning that concepts of the narratology can be expanded to different media products. Narratology can deal with the literary narratives of all times and cultures, (34) as well as with films and theater presentations, but also with comics, poetry, visual arts, radio plays or even computer games; and the reason why this study is reviewed here is because it can also deal the field of cultural-historical science. Here, the cross-genre comparison, including the changing of the concepts of description is a crucial aspect of the current theory of narratology and must be seen as a contribution to the field of "cultural-sciences" (Kulturwissenschaften). [ 4 ]

This 'intermediacy' is the common ground of the four following tendencies of nowadays narratology. Although these developed separated, it is widely accepted that a sharp distinction would be unproductive and that they can be brought together. (36)

1. Postomodern narratology: Some narratologists, who are influenced and shaped by post-structuralism, question the fixed categories of narratology to point out that meaning is variable and can only be cleared through the interaction of texts (intertextuality). (34)

2. Pragmatic Turn: Nowadays narratological approaches increasingly recognize that a narrative is always part of human communication - a fact which structuralist narratology ignored completely, because it was working only on co-text.

3. The cognitive turn and reception research: Following the cognitive turn means firstly to describe the process of text production but mainly the focus lies here in the description of the text reception in an empirical and cognitive-psychological way. The analysis of the text reception can be divided into two parts:
1) the description of previous knowledge: Here, the focus of the analysis is on the narratives "frame" and "script", the indispensable cultural and historical prior knowledge of the recipient. A "frame" is our substantial, semiotic wisdom, such as the idea of a terrorist, a bird or a desert. The "script" on the other hand stands for the previous procedural knowledge (situational script). (38) In other words: what can we expect in a certain situation of the narrative, e.g. in a restaurant, at the dentist or at the court of Aurgangzb (died 1707).

2) The description of the process of understanding: The issue here is one of the most interesting and certainly most challenging: how can we analyze those "frames" that fall outside the text? Former structural narratological analyses focused only on the text. Now the role played by the recipient has been brought into narratology: empathy, sympathy, excitement, i.e. the emotions of the reception, are gaining more and more attention in nowadays narratology. (43)

4. Cultural/historical turn: Surprisingly enough for just a very few years the historical and cultural context has attracted the attention of narratology. This cultural/historical turn therefore has a lot in common with the cognitive turn just mentioned above, as the focus is the context of the narrative and no longer the structuralistic isolated description of the narrative. The roots of the cultural/historical turn can be found in the feminist narratology, which began around the middle of the 1980's, and within postcolonial narrative theory. (35) They both point out that the context cannot be factored. This cultural/historical turn can therefore be seen as the logical result of the cognitive turn, as the specific previous knowledge of the author and its reader is always cultural and historical. Certainly, the cultural/historical turn is crucial for the relationship between narratology and the historic-critical method.

To conclude: Nowadays literary theory and narratology, which is often called "pragmatic narratology", have recognized the historical/cultural context of the narrative. However, we still need to wait for concrete methodological steps and studies to analyze this context precisely. (46) Finnern's study is divided into two main parts - the first one provides an excellent introduction into the history and actual tendencies of narratological analyses, (chapter 2: Theorie und Methode der Erzählanalyse, 23-245), which I have just tried to summarize above. The second one (chapter three: "Praxis der Erzählanalyse, 247-437) can certainly be seen as an example of impressive scholarship. Here, Finnern takes the main five points of analysis, which I will list below, uses and evaluates them step by step, always bearing in mind, that the fifth point of his study - the analysis of the the reception (Rezeptionsanalyse) - (194-243, 392-439) goes far beyond actual tendencies within the field of nowadays narratological investigation (184).

Finnern's five analytical steps (examples for the use within in the field of Islamic Studies are mine):

0. General Analysis (47-79, 265-273)
01. The differentiation of separate narrative levels
Where/when and how often does the figure (e.g. a Mughal or Ottoman king of the 16th century in his chronicle) becomes the narrator?
02. The signals of fiction
Which cultural specifities does the autor want to show us through the factuality or the fictuality of his text, with respect to parts/chapters of his text?

03. Fictional conception
Every narrative can be classified in a matrix of Fictionality and Poeticity. That means, what kind of literary methods does the author use to create an exciting narrative or to strengthen the recipients emotions. Although there are of course fictional texts without any poetical methods and on the other side factional texts including several poetical methods (e.g. journalistic or popular scientific texts), there are still some clear features, which indicate the fictuality of the text. For example - does a figure of the text speeches directly to the reader (Metalepse)? Do we find many clear details or the opposite (Anachronien), which would mean that the author (or even better: Autoreninstanz) would spares to present the reader important information to raise the excitement?

1. The analysis of the narrative environment (79-86, 273-289)
1.1 Environment-Level
Here we find a detailed description for an analysis of the socio-cultural setting of the text, its time-frame and its spacial aspects. What is possible in this world and what not? (see also 1.3 below [the environment of the plot]).
1.2. The constellation of the environment
What kinds of attributes are assigned to the specific environmental elements? Are they friendly or hostile? Is the setting of the text a typical one for its time or an exceptional one? What is the authors reason for writing about of the locus amoenus (= the ideal place).
1.3. The environment and the plot
What kind of special, social and religious borders exist in the world of the text? Are these borders fixed or are they porous and can they be crossed? And who are the figures which cross these borders: where, why and when? What is the author’s opinion about it? Is he positive about it? Is he negative about it? (see also 4.5 [the narrators standpoint]).
1.4. The presentation of the environment
Which cultural specific narratological techniques are used to present the setting?
1.5. The reception of the environment
Which symbolical meanings, moods and atmosphere are connected to the time and space presented?
1.6. The concept of the environment
Different settings are classified and combined, concerning the dynamics, their complexity, their mysteriousness, the applicability of the setting.

2. The analysis of the plot (87-127, 290-324)
2.1. The elements of the plot
Of which single-events is the plot composed? How does the density of the plot change? Which episodes of the plot/which sequences are comparable with one another, which are exceptional?
2.2. The importance of the elements
Which are the most important elements of the narrative? Which are the less important?

2.3. The plot presentation: narrative time versus plot length
The order of the plot presentation: Do we find analepses ("flashback") and/or prolepses ("flash-forward")?
The pace of the presentation: Where is time compressed, time stretches? Where does the time stand still? Do we find ellipses - certain parts of the text are missed, to create a certain tempo and atmosphere - or even a pause? Is there a specific and general temporhythm? For example, how does time change when the Europeans enter the plot? Does it become slow and prolonged or fast and/or even hectic because of the use of many ellipses?
The rate of the plot presentation: Are there any specific events which are told repeatedly? Which kind of events are they? Tragic or Triumphant?

2.4 The structure of the plot and the type of plots
Can we classify the text within a certain genre? Where is the introduction to the plot placed? Where is the climax and the decline of the plot placed? How does the 'curve of luck and fortune' of the figures proceed?

2.5 The course of action
Is the recipient able to guess what will happen next in the plot or is he always surprised? Where and in what way does the author use the moment of surprising? Which characters assert their intentions?

2.6. Conflicts as a central part of the plot
Do we find conflicts which push the plot forward? What type of conflict is presented in the plot? For example a conflict of unfulfilled wishes or duties, a conflict because of a lack of knowledge, a moral or inner conflict, a reality conflict or a conflict of wishes; Does the plot contain mainly political and party conflicts - and which are these? Where does the conflict of the plot start and where does it end? How does the bend of conflicts change during the plot?

2.7. The plot line
Does the text have different plot lines with different places and figures. And in which way are the scenes linked with?

2.8. The beginning and the end of the plot:
The beginning of the plot: Do we find certain contents of the narrative, which are emphasized because of their initial position? How high is the expesionality of the plot (is the recipient 'thrown' into the middle of the action or he is introduced in the content of the narrative?)
The end of the plot: How did author create the end of his text? For example through the fulfilled destiny of the characters, the solution of the main conflict/several conflicts, through a point (= e.g. does the main figure gain knowledge at the end?) - and, do we find parallels to the beginning, which would help to analyze the closure of the text. Is the end and expected one or a surprising one or is it even implausible. What are the final emotions of the reception, is it a happy end for example?

3. The Analysis of the figures (125-166, 325-364)
3.1. The existence of the figures and their configuration:
Which kind of figures appear in the scenes? Do they have a certain pattern, when they appear?
3.2. The features of the figures:
Which features of the figure are mentioned by the author? And is the intended recipient able to understand these features with his cultural knowledge? The features can be listed as following: The identity of the figure, its characteristics and traits, its opinion and experiences, its emotion and way of behaviour, its appearance (its look, its sex and its age), its social context, its wisdom and duties, its wishes and emotions. The constellation of the figures features: In which way are these features interlinked? Do we find main- or optional features?
The comparison of the figures (features): Does the author compare one figure with another figure of the text, with figures of other narratives, with historical idols? Are they parallelized or contrasted? What is the spectrum of the figures features in general?
3.3. The constellation of the figures:
Here, the relationship of the figures (sympathy, rejection, familiar relationship) among themselves will be analyzed.
3.4. The figure and the action:
The importance of the figure in the narrative. Next to the main figure, is there another main figure or a minor figure, which might be important as well? Is it a helping figure or a marginal figure? A background figure or a an 'episode-figure' (a figure, which is just mentioned once in a scene, respectively in a chapter). The function of the figure within the narrative: which role of action does the figure takes up? A protagonist/antagonist, the trigger figure, a decision maker, a perceiver or helper?
3.5. The presentation of the figures:
Which are the techniques of the author to describe his figures? That means, are the features presented in the text explicit or implicit. Also, is it always the author, who introduces other figures or is it done as well by other figures (through which we would see the authors distance towards the described object)? Is the description of the figure made en bloc, or separated, detailed or shortly, several times or just once? And is this characterization [un]believable? Which are the techniques of the characterization of the figures in general?
3.6. The figures conception:
How can the figure be described in general? Is it a static or dynamic figure a brief or detailed one, one-dimensional or multidimensional, a typical figure or an individual, transparent or mysterious, realistic or unrealistic, coherent or incoherent, specific or symbolic/trans-psychological? In short: is it a simple figure or a complex one, a "deep" or "round" one?
4. The Analysis of the perspective (164-185, 365-391)
4.1 The Participation:
How strong is the narrator involved into the action? As a main/minor/marginal figure, as a watching figure (first-person narrator) or as an uninvolved narrator?
4.2. Distance of speech:
In which immediacy is the speech of the figure presented? Is it a short call report, indirect/free and direct speech, does the modus change
during the speech/thought? Are there specific persons of certain
religions, classes, ranks, sex, etc. who always use (in)direct speech)?
4.3. The center of perception and inner view (fokalisation):
Inner view: How much does the author know about the figures, their
perception, wisdom, their feelings, the intention of a figure.
Center of perception: Which figure is accompanied permanently in his
perception (fokalisator).
4.4. The narrator:
What kind of picture does the author produce of himself for the
recipient? Where and when does he start to tell his stories? What does
the reader know about the author, about his age, his sex, his social
heritage and about the personality of the author? How present is the
author in the text and which techniques does he use? In general: What
does the recipient know and what not?
4.5. The narrators standpoint:
How does the narrator evaluate certain figures, their attributes and ways
of acting, settings, events? Which norms and values can we find behind
the narrators value judgement? In which facts does the narrator truly
believe in, where is he skeptical? How does the narrators standpoint
conduct to those of the other figures?
The addresses of the narrative: In which context is the story told? How
much can we find out about the addresses of the narrative?
5. The Analysis of the reception (186-243, 393-438)
5.1. Empathy:
How close does the recipient feel itself towards a figure of the narrative?
Will the empathy-factors of the figure change during the text? What
about the Europeans (if they are mentioned)? Will they always be
described in a negative way or do they have their certain empathy-
factors?
5.2. Sympathy:
How does the recipient judge a figure? What are the reasons for
sympathy or antipathy towards a figure?
5.3. Reality effect:
How deep can the recipient dive into the narrative? Which factors
support the immersion (Does the narrator use plenty of details and
clearness for example?)
5.4. Excitement:
How exciting is the narrative in different parts? Where can we find bends
of exciting? Which kind of exciting exist?
5.5. The recipients emotions:
Which emotions does the recipient relate with one of the figures? Hope, joy,
fear, relieve, compassion, frustration, anger? Which emotions do the
attributes of the environment, of the figures or events awake? Shiver,
lust, joy or hilarity? Does the author use aesthetic emotions, e.g.:
astonishment, strong attractions, latent resistance?
5.6. Intended application:
Are we able to refer certain elements of the narrative to the world of the
recipient? What is said about important (historical) events? For example:
the application of the figures: Is the recipient able to find himself,
another person or the struggle of human existence in general within a
certain figure? What are the aspects this identification refers to?
5.7. The narrators intended change of the recipients opinion and
behavior:
First of all, which pre-settings and former convictions might the recipient
have? Therefore, which beliefs, attitudes and convictions want the
narrator influence or change with his narrative? Which factors support
the change? Is the narrative told in a reflective way or do we find rather
periphery-cues/signals? What might be the reason, the recipient changes
and acts in the intended way? In general: what configuration of
persuasion does the author (Persuasionskonfiguration) use?
This whole field of narratological investigations on Arabic, Farsi or
Ottoman texts is absolutely new and, as mentioned above, there are only
a very, very few studies and scholars dealing with it. However, their
results are highly welcome, not to mention important contributions to the
field of inter-cultural historical investigations. [8]
Finally, Sönke Finnern provides us with an excellent and detailed tool-
kit to be used when starting a narratological analysis of 'our' sources, be
these the Bible, the 'ahādīth, Islamic chronicles, etc. He provides the
reader with several innovative and informative tables (e.g. 240-243), as
well as a detailed and excellent evaluation (439-486) of each concrete
methodological step he used. Considering all these elements, therefore,
this splendid book can only be recommended.

Anmerkungen:
Semiotics 3, publ. by Th. A. Sebeok, Den Haag/Paris 1969, 10. This term
is often used especially to define the French structuralistic approaches to
the narrative and is confronted to the German "Erzähltheorie" ("theory
of the narrative"). In addition to Finnern and Nünning, I will use them
both synonymously.
[2] Peter Wenzel: Einführung in die Erzählanalyse. Kategorien, Modelle,
Probleme, Trier 2004.
literaturwissenschaftliche Bibelauslegung. Eine Methodenlehre zur
[5] In German, once have to choose between the following options:
"Erzähltextanalyse, Erzählanalyse, narrative Analyse, narratologische
Analyse."
[6] Brian Richardson: Recent Concepts of Narrative and the Narratives
[7] Concerning the field of Islamic Studies, there just a very few but
therefore even more important studies dealing with the actual tendencies
and possibilities of 'Kulturwissenschaften', which stays in contrast to
the Anglo-American 'Cultural-Studies', see Stephan Conermann:
Islamwissenschaft als Kulturwissenschaft. Historische Anthropologie.
Ansätze und Möglichkeiten, Schenenfeld 2007, p.1; Marco Schöller:
Methode und Wahrheit in der Islamwissenschaft. Prolegomena,

[8] How this would look like in practice, will be shown in the review of Nader Purnaqchebad's study within the current issue of the 'Islamische Welten'.