

Zukunftsphilologie: Revisiting the Canons of Textual Practice Workshop

July 15 – 16, 2011

Venue: Freie Universität Berlin, Habelschwerdter Allee 45, 14195 Berlin, Room JK 31/102

How Different is the “Other”? Eighteenth Century Perceptions of Religious and Racial Difference in Ottoman Lands

Conveners

Islam Dayeh (Freie Universität Berlin, Zukunftsphilologie)

Lejla Demiri (Fellow of Europe in the Middle East - The Middle East in Europe)

Feras Krimsti (Zentrum Moderner Orient)

Description:

The Ottoman lands witnessed in the eighteenth century a gradual decentralisation of power, marked by the relative independence of the provinces, *vilâyet*, and the appearance of local authorities. The empowerment of the provinces enabled the crystallization of forms of representation, political and cultural, particular to the provinces. As a consequence, identities were negotiated and new subjectivities forged. Writings from the provinces in this period exhibit a concern with what appears to be ethnic and religious difference, revolving around constructions such as Arabness, Turkishness, and various religious affinities. This novel eighteenth century social reality is particularly noteworthy, considering that central Ottoman authorities did not claim legitimacy on the basis of ethnic allegiance. Indeed, Ottoman authorities neither produced propaganda nor enacted laws that enforced ethnic demarcation. In fact, Ottoman authorities, unlike later nation-states, seem not to have required from their subjects any sort of ideological loyalty or affiliation. Only with the relative independence of the provinces in the eighteenth century do we begin to observe the formation of social groupings and political interests expressed in the language of ethnic and religious difference.

Bearing this social reality in mind, the two-day workshop seeks to cast light on the literary and intellectual cultures of the Ottoman provinces (Anatolian, Balkan and Arab) in the eighteenth century in order to explore the extent to which eighteenth century literary cultures were distinctive due to their provincial nature. In contrast to the theological and sociological approaches to so-called inter-religious relations and tribal conflicts in this period, the workshop aims to look more closely at how these ‘differences’ were actually imagined and negotiated in the intellectual production of the period. By ‘intellectual production’ we mean the broad range

of writings that are, generically, neither documentary nor normative. This leaves aside, consciously, the vast and rich court-archives as well as normative legal texts.

The workshop will therefore explore aspects of the production and function of difference in theological, philosophical, philological, historiographical and *adab* texts, whereby the focus will be on literary representation, semantic articulation and the mechanisms through which difference is negotiated. Such writings include those of ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (1050-1143/1641-1731), an influential Damascene mystic and theologian; Abdallah Zakhir (d. 1748), a leading Christian author; Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī (1099-1162/1688-1749); Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (1145-1205/1732-1791), a prominent scholar and lexicographer; ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī (d. 1825), an important historian; Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Tūnisī (1204-1274/1789-1857), and other notable figures of significant intellectual impact. By carefully examining and comparing their literary production, the aim is also to search for common as well as contrasting themes, concerns, debates and terminology in the writings of this period. Furthermore, comparisons between and among Ottoman provinces and, in particular, comparison of Anatolian, Balkan, and Arab provinces during the eighteenth century could shed much light on how a decentralized empire functioned and how the provinces began to articulate, through language, forms of distinctiveness and difference. Rather than focusing on the assumed ‘factual reality’ of religious and racial difference in the period under study, the novelty of this workshop lies in its particular emphasis on the *literary and conceptual mechanisms of producing difference and sameness*. How is ‘difference’ constructed, manipulated and interpreted? What sort of language politics and theological hermeneutics are at stake? How do genealogies function and how do they assume epistemological authority? What types of texts are produced to this end and how do they relate to these new social realities and particularly of group formation and self-demarkation?

By consciously refraining from reducing the richness of human cultural interaction in the eighteenth century to dichotomies such as Muslim-Christian or Jewish-Muslim or Muslim-Muslim relations, or to colonially and racially charged categories such as African, Turk, Arab, Greek and Anatolian, the workshop takes as its point of departure the view that such religious and ethnic differences are constructions contingent upon shifting conceptual paradigms, intimately linked to modes of power and legitimation. The working hypothesis therefore is that such dichotomies and ethnic categories are not given realities but constructions in need of careful dismantling and analytical scrutiny. Did difference really make a difference?

Format:

In order to give each speaker enough time to present his or her work as well as to ensure a lively and fruitful discussion, each speaker will be allotted 45 minutes, which will consist of:

30 min presentation and textual analysis

This will consist of an introduction, a discussion of the methodological issues at stake and a close examination of the source-text(s) in the original language.

15 min discussion

Presentations can be given and discussed in English and in Arabic.

Schedule:

Main Venue: Freie Universität Berlin, Habelschwerdter Allee 45, 14195 Berlin, Room JK 31/102

Friday, July 15

10.00 - 10.30 **Introduction**

10.30 – 11.30 Stefan Reichmuth (Ruhr-Universität Bochum)
Muslim and Non-Muslim Peoples and Regions in the *Tāj al-‘arūs* of Murtaḍa al-Zabīdī (d. 1791)

11.30 – 11.45 **Coffee Break**

11.45 – 12.30 Muhammad Sabri al-Dali (Helwan University, Cairo)
The Turkish as Other in Modern Egyptian Historiographies – 17th Century to Early 19th Century Perspectives
Presentation given in Arabic

12.30 – 13.15 Feras Krimsti (Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin)
When Arabic Translations Surpass Their French Originals: The Dispute over the Spirit of Oriental Christianity between ‘Abdallāh Zākhir and the Jesuit Missionaries
Presentation given in Arabic

13.15 – 15.00 **Lunch**

15.00 – 15.45 Lejla Demiri (EUME Fellow 2010/11)
‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī’s (d. 1731) Understanding of Religious Pluralism

15.45 – 16.00 **Coffee Break**

16.00– 16.45 Samuela Pagani (University of Lecce, Italy)
Ḥadd Penalties and Eschatological Damnation according to ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī

Saturday, July 16

10.00 - 10.45 Sait Özervarlı (Yıldız Technical University, Istanbul)
Rapprochement with the Different:
Intra-Communal Reconciliation in the Eighteenth Century Ottoman Mind

10.45 – 11.00 **Coffee Break**

11.00 – 11.45 Gülçin Tunalı-Koç (Ruhr-Universität Bochum)
How Did an Ottoman Judge of Athens Narrate Religion in Ancient Greece while Taking Scholarly Help from Grigoris Sotiris & Theophanis Kavallaris?

11.45 – 12.00 **Coffee Break**

12.00 – 12.45 Burcu Gürsel (Zukunftsphilologie Fellow 2010/11)
A Place and Time for Difference:
Bargaining Otherness and Reform in and around Mouradgea d’Ohsson’s Treatise for the Military School

12.45 **Concluding Session**

Lunch

Abstracts and CVs:

Lejla Demiri - 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī's (d. 1731) Understanding of Religious Pluralism

How does 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, an 18th century prominent scholar of Ottoman Damascus, explain the plurality of religions? The present paper will explore this question by a thorough examination of Nābulusī's treatise on the salvation of the religious 'Other', *al-Qawl al-sadīd* (Sound discourse). Relevant passages will be analysed by way of comparison and contrast within the broad spectrum of his scholarship.

Lejla Demiri (Fellow of EUME 2010/11, affiliated to the Seminar für Semitistik und Arabistik, Freie Universität, Berlin) holds a PhD from the University of Cambridge (2008), where she also worked as a Junior Research Fellow (Trinity Hall, 2007-2010). She previously studied Christian Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, where she obtained her Licentiate degree (2004) and Post-graduate Diploma (2003). Prior to that, she received her MA (2000) and BA (1998) degrees in Islamic Theology from Marmara University in Istanbul.

Burcu Gürsel - A Place and Time for Difference: Bargaining Otherness and Reform in and around Mouradgea d'Ohsson's Treatise for the Military School

Ignatius Mouradgea d'Ohsson (Muradcan Tosunyan), an Ottoman Armenian born in Istanbul and an interpreter of the Swedish embassy in Izmir, published his larger work *Tableau General de l'Empire Ottoman* in French while living in France, and was also commissioned a treatise for the reform of Military School under Selim III. My paper first traces the way his treatise, originally written in French but surviving in Ottoman Turkish (transliterated in Karal 1984), negotiates difference by shifting emphasis from religious difference to its assimilation in and reinforcement of imperial power. The religious difference is mentioned both as a defining feature of nations competing in terms of the military and technology, and inheritors of different philosophical traditions. The key logic of reconciling the empire with difference is also one of shifting from the past to the projection of a future anterior—difference is acceptable because it will have been mastered by the empire. Similarly, he both proposes the admission of Muslim and (to a lesser proportion) Christian students in the school but explicitly toward the elimination of imperial reliance on "foreigners". My paper will conclude with a discussion of attendant historical texts that report on d'Ohsson's fall from grace as a suspected spy, and how his own international involvements (such as living in France while remaining connected with Sweden) and Armenian background were retrospectively and openly problematized to frame him.

Burcu Gürsel (Fellow of Zukunftsphilologie 2010/11) received her BA from the University of Chicago and her PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Pennsylvania. During her graduate studies she taught at University of Pennsylvania and Université de Paris 7, and more recently she has taught literature courses at Sabancı University in Istanbul. Based on her dissertation, her book project, "Invasive Translations: Violence and Mediation of the False-Colonial, France and Ottoman Egypt (1780-1840)" explores the homologies between conceptions of political translatability in the seemingly disparate contexts of late-eighteenth century France and Ottoman Egypt. The project investigates the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt (1798-1801), the

institutionalization of French Orientalism and Egyptology, and the incipient Ottoman Egyptian modernization/translation reforms, as “false-colonial” sites. Its central concern is the political conceptualizations of the role of the translator at a moment of transformation, from that of a privileged figure of political mediation to one of subservient expertise during military invasion and expansion. In her work, Burcu seeks to capture the unique ways in which multilingual literary, theoretical, or historical texts, and variously intersecting historical events and cultural contexts each bring the other(s) into relief.

Feras Krimsti - When Arabic Translations Surpass Their French Originals: The Dispute over the Spirit of Oriental Christianity between ‘Abdallāh Zākhir and the Jesuit Missionaries

In recent scholarship, the name of ‘Abdallāh Zākhir (d. 1748) has been mainly associated with the introduction of a printing press in the 18th century Levant. Almost no attention has hitherto been devoted to Zākhir’s literary, polemical and theological works. But Zākhir was deeply involved in the disputes of his time taking place between Eastern theologians and European missionaries about the future and shaping of oriental Christianity. Focusing on a long, untitled polemical work against the Jesuit missionaries (1740), the paper will examine moral, religious and linguistic claims as well as distinctions with which Zākhir tried to define and delineate his group’s identity.

Feras Krimsti studied History at the University of Aleppo and completed his degree in Islamic Studies, Arabic Philology, and History at the Freie Universität Berlin in June 2010. His M.A. thesis about urban unrest in Aleppo in the 1850s was devoted to the question of the influence of the Tanzimat reforms on the society of Ottoman Aleppo. Feras Krimsti’s research interests include Ottoman Bilād al-Shām and the field of Ottoman Studies. He is currently a researcher at the ZMO. His PhD project focuses on representations of Istanbul as the capital of the Ottoman Empire in Arab travelogues of the 17th and 18th century.

Sait Özervarlı - Rapprochement with the Different: Intra-Communal Reconciliation in the Eighteenth Century Ottoman Mind

With the diminishing authority of the Safavids in the 18th century, and the weakening ties of the new Iranian rulers with Shiism, the Ottomans started to reconsider their relations with the Shiite community. The emergence of Nadir Shah as the advocator of dialogue was an unprecedented challenge for the Ottomans, who also had a Shiite population in parts of their territory. During the reign of Mahmud I, the Ottomans engaged in several diplomatic and scholarly meetings with the representatives of the Shah. Among some results of the efforts was a written agreement to end hostility between the two communities and to stop accusations of heresy against each other. In my paper I will examine these historical debates to analyze the mentality of perceiving intra-religious differences and the level of tolerance among the elites of the time.

Sait Özervarlı received his PhD at Marmara University, Istanbul in 1994. He did his post-doctoral studies at Harvard University, and was a member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton during 2002-03. Özervarlı taught at Marmara University, worked as a researcher at ISAM, and was a RCAC fellow at Koç University. He wrote books on the Revitalization of Ottoman *kalām* in

modern times (1998), Ibn Taymiyya's critical methodology (2008), and Aspects of Ottoman intellectual history (2009). His focuses are mainly on comparative intellectual history, Ottoman thought, East-West interactions, methodological discussions, and alternative modernization theories. He is currently Professor and Chair at Yıldız Technical University Department of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Samuela Pagani - *Hadd Penalties and Eschatological Damnation according to 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī*

My analysis will be based mainly on Nābulusī's commentary upon the chapter on Jonas of Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣuṣ al-ḥikam*. In this text, the enforcing of *ḥadd* penalties and the eternal damnation of unbelievers are two closely interrelated subjects. Both secular and eschatological retribution presuppose a sharp divide between friend and enemy, or self and other. The questioning of this assumption in the source text is further elaborated in Nābulusī's commentary. The latter's interest on the two issues of secular and eschatological retribution can shed light on the relationship between political power and religious identity, as seen from the perspective of a "provincial mufti".

Samuela Pagani is lecturer in Arabic language and literature at the University of Salento (Lecce, Italy). She got a Ph.D. in Islamic Studies from the "Istituto Orientale" of Naples in 2000. Her main research field is the intellectual history of Sufism in the early modern period; she focused on mystical hermeneutics of legal texts among Ibn 'Arabī's commentators, and religious polemics against Sufism in 17th-18th century. Among her publications related to this subject: *Il rinnovamento mistico dell'Islam. Un commento di 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī a Ahmad Sirhindī*, Istituto Universitario Orientale, Dissertationes III, Napoli 2003; "The meaning of the *ikhtilāf al-madhāhib* in 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī's *al-Mīzān al-kubrā*", in *Islamic Law and Society* 11/2 (2004), pp. 177-212; "Renewal before Reformism. 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi's reading of Ahmad Sirhindi's ideas on *tajdid*", in *Journal of the History of Sufism* 5 (2007) [Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, Jean Maisonneuve, Paris, 2008], pp. 291-317; "Défendre le soufisme par des temps difficiles: 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi, polémiste anti-puritan", in R. Chih, D. Gril, C. Mayeur-Jaouen (eds), *Le soufisme en Egypte et dans le monde musulman à l'époque ottomane*, Cairo, Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 2010, pp. 309-335.

Stefan Reichmuth - *Muslim and Non-Muslim Peoples and Regions in the Tāj al-'arūs of Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (d. 1791)*

More than any other Arabic lexicon, the *Tāj al-'arūs* (finished in 1774), provides ample information on different Muslim regions, cities and peoples, on their history and their famous personalities. Apart from relying on a wide range of geographical and historical sources beside the lexicographical ones, the personal and contemporary dimensions of the *Tāj* clearly go beyond the limits of the lexicographical tradition. The huge lexicon can be seen as linking the present with the past, thus creating a very colourful picture of the historical Muslim world and even touching some non-Muslim peoples and states. Apart from evoking the historical unity and greatness of the Islamic world, the nostalgia over the loss of Islamic Spain, and a growing sense

of the military and naval strength of the Europeans and in their scientific achievements are sometimes also betrayed in the *Tāj*. The lecture will attempt to reconstruct Zabīdī's vision of an Islamic culture that underlies his lexicographical enterprise, and also his response to the challenges confronting this vision.

Stefan Reichmuth, Prof. Dr., b. 1950. Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Seminar of Oriental and Islamic Studies, Ruhr-University Bochum. Some publications: *Der arabische Dialekt der Šukriyya im Ostsudan* (1983), *Islamische Bildung und soziale Integration in Ilorin (Nigeria) seit ca. 1800* (1998), (Co-editor) *Zwischen Alltag und Schriftkultur: Horizonte des Individuellen in der arabischen Literatur des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (2008), *The World of Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (1732-91). Life, Networks, and Writings of an 18th-century Islamic scholar* (2009), (Co-editor): *Islamic Education in the Soviet Union and its Successor States* (2010), *Mündlicher und literarischer Wissenstransfer in Ägypten im späten 18./frühen 19. Jahrhundert: Arabische Gelehrte und ihr Zugang zu europäischer Naturwissenschaft*(2010), Chief editor of the Journal „Die Welt des Islams“, Sub-Editor of the sections “Islam“, „Osmanisches Reich“, Enzyklopädie der Neuzeit (since 2005), Major research interests: The Islamic world of the Early Modern Period in transregional perspective, History of Islamic learning and education in the Early Modern and Modern Periods, Islamic scholarly networks since the 18th century, Language and Religion in Muslim societies.

Mohammad Sabri al-Dali – The Turkish as Other in Modern Egyptian Historiographies – 17th Century to Early 19th Century Perspectives

In order to explore Egyptian self-consciousness as well as Egyptian perspectives on the “other”, including the Ottoman Turks, in the early Modern period, it is indispensable to re-read the written heritage that was produced in Ottoman Egypt. This paper will deal with descriptions and appellations of the “Turkish” in Egyptian heritage, as they appear in several literary and historical works, such as the writings of al-Khafajī (d. 1658) and al-Jabartī (d. 1825). With the aim of exploring Egyptian attitudes toward Ottoman Turks, the paper aspires to examine the following:

1. The relation between the appearance and disappearance of Egyptian identity on the one hand, and the acceptance and refusal of Ottoman Turkish on the other.
2. The relation between the political and economic situation in the Ottoman Empire as a whole, and Ottoman Egypt in particular, and the nature of intellectual production.
3. The extent to which Egyptian intellectual production reflects ethnic differences regarding the Ottoman Turks.

Mohammad Sabri al-Dali is Professor of Modern History at Helwan University, Egypt, and General advisor of manuscripts at the Egyptian National Library. He was educated at the Universities of Mansura and Asyut, has been a researcher at the Institute of Oriental Culture at Tokyo University, and received his Ph.D. from Helwan University with a thesis on “The European Powers and the Ottoman-Russian Struggle over the Black Sea”. His research interest is focused on the intellectual history of Egypt during Ottoman times. Professor al-Dali is an active member of the Egyptian Historical Society. Among his publications (mostly in Arabic) are: *The Role of Sufism in Egyptian History during the Ottoman Period* (Cairo 1994), *The Zawiya and Egyptian Society in the 16th Century* (Tokyo 2000), *The Ulama' and the Ottoman Occupation of Egypt* (Tokyo 2001), *Ottoman Historical Research in Egypt since 1936* (in English, Tokyo 2001), *The Political Discourse*

of Sufism in Egypt (Cairo 2004), Modern Russia and Russians in Egyptian Historical Works (Cairo 2006). 1999-2001 he was Fellow of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) and Fellow of EUME 2007/08.

Gülçin Tunalı-Koç - How did an Ottoman *Mufti* of Athens Narrate Religion in Ancient Greece while Taking Scholarly Help from Grigoris Sotiris & Theophanis Kavallaris?

My dissertation project focuses on the perception and representation of Athens in the eighteenth century Ottoman history text, *Târih-i Medinetu'l- Hukemâ (History of the City of the Philosophers)*, by Mahmud Efendi, with the help from two Greek abbots, namely Grigoris Sotiris and Theophanis Kavallaris.

While narrating ancient Athens, Mahmud Efendi also mentioned social and economic life, traditions and religion. “What did he ‘read’ from the paganism of antique Athens?” is the question I aim to analyze in this presentation with a special emphasis on his division between pagans, Greeks and Venetians.

Born in Bursa, **Gülçin Tunalı-Koç** studied Sociology in Bogazici University in Istanbul (1999). Just after writing her MA thesis on the daily concerns of an Ottoman astrologer in the same university’s History department, her first daughter was born (2002). Her second daughter came into the world while Gülçin was in Germany for her PhD. She currently lives in Istanbul and plans to find out Alexander the Great among the Ottoman literati, when her dissertation finishes.

Zukunftsphilologie: Revisiting the Canons of Textual Scholarship

The project Zukunftsphilologie endeavours to promote and emphasize primary textual scholarship beyond the classical humanistic canon. In an age of advanced communication, intellectual specialization, and unprecedented migration of knowledge and people, the discipline of philology assumes new relevance. Zukunftsphilologie aspires to support research in neglected varieties of philology with the explicit aim to integrate texts and scholarly traditions from Asia, Africa, the Middle East as well as from Europe itself.

Zukunftsphilologie refers to the polemic between the classicist Ulrich von Wilamowitz and Friedrich Nietzsche around the method and meaning of classical studies. As a project it sees itself as part of a growing trend towards a more global intellectual history. It is inspired in particular by the work of Edward Said and Sheldon Pollock.

In order to promote historically-conscious philology, Zukunftsphilologie will foster research in the following areas: genealogies and transformations of philological practice, philology's place in the system of knowledge (e.g. its relation to science, theology and jurisprudence), and philology and the university. Furthermore, Zukunftsphilologie aims to support critical reviews of historical and philological practice. In revisiting important „philological wars“, the goal is not to merely evaluate the argumentative worth of these debates, but to reflect on the wider cultural and political context in which these „philological wars“ emerged and how they have shaped our knowledge of the past.

The project Zukunftsphilologie is co-directed by Angelika Neuwirth, Manan Ahmed and Islam Dayeh (all Freie Universität Berlin) and is associated with and located at the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School for Literary Studies at Freie Universität Berlin. Zukunftsphilologie is a project at the Forum Transregionale Studien.

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For more information please see:

www.forum-transregionale-studien.de

<http://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/friedrichschlegel/promotionsprogramm/kooperationen/Zukunftsphilologie/index.html>