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CONGRESS

Middle East and Muslim Worlds
Studies

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Panel 7 b)

Human Sciences and Epistemological Debates in Contemporary Islamic Thought Ongoing Research

Since the middle of the 20th century, Muslim thinkers have considered human sciences as a decisive instrument for the transformation or defense of Islamic knowledge and culture. Among the disciplines, history and law are seen as means of reconstructing, subverting or asserting the legal, epistemic and theological legacy of Islam. Rooted in the human sciences, theologians and jurists from Syria, Iran and other countries have undertaken to criticize classical Islamic knowledge. Their criticisms led to new formulations of dogmas and legal theory, and even to the creation of new disciplines of knowledge within religious schools. At the same time, the historiographies of European scholars of Islam were challenged both by religious scholars and by international cultural institutions that wanted to promote specifically Islamic writing of history. By paying attention to scientific and cultural institutions, the workshop participants would like to highlight the content and scope of the epistemological debates conducted within them. In particular, they aim to highlight the patrimonial stakes of scientific norms and the interactions between scientific work on Islam and the debates of actors who speak in the name of Islam.

Person in charge: Constance Arminjon (EPHE-PSL)

Program

Sahra Ghozi (EPHE-PSL)

The investment of Arab and Islamic organizations in UNESCO's human and social science programs: the case of the editorial project "Different aspects of Islamic culture" (1977-2016)

This will present the genesis of the DACI historiographic project (1977-2016), which was carried out within the framework of international cooperation between UNESCO and Arab and Islamic organizations. It will be a question of highlighting the epistemological dissensions between the different actors around the issue of writing history.

Paola Pizzi (EPHE-PSL)

History as the Source of the Quran: The Call for Epistemological Renewal in the Thought of the Syrian Theologian Čawdat Sa ĩd (1931-)

The integration of Humanities into the epistemological horizon of Islamic thought is perceived by many contemporary Muslim intellectuals as an urgent need that can no longer be postponed because of a renewal of religious discourse. For Syrian Sunni theologian Čawdat Sa ĩd (b. 1931), it is history, in particular, that awaits to be recognized as the episteme par excellence and, according to this perspective, it is described in his works as the source of the Quran. In this presentation, I aim to analyze the origin, the

meaning and the implications of this fundamental axiom which is at the core of the whole theoretical framework of Sa'īd, thus determining his hermeneutical approach to the sacred text.

Eva Zahiri (EPHE-PSL)

Legal dualism in contemporary Iran: epistemological debates in Iranian universities

Since the 2000s, legal thinking has undergone new developments at the Shahid Beheshti University Law Faculty in Tehran and this ongoing evolution will be at the center of this presentation. Jurists and philosophers of law focus on the "crisis" of the law caused by the institutionalized legal dichotomy. According to them, this heterogeneity leads to legal inconsistencies and even paralyzes the theory as well as the practice of law. This is why they are contemplating new theories of law that tend to consider Muslim law as a historical and patrimonial element of law rather than as its "center of gravity".