

Zukunftsphilologie

Forum
Transregionale
Studien

Freie Universität



Berlin

FRIEDRICH SCHLEGEL
GRADUIERTENSCHULE
für literaturwissenschaftliche Studien

Workshop

May 24 – 26, 2012

Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, Villa Jaffé, Wallotstr. 10, 14193 Berlin

Lingua Franca: Explorations of the Literary Geography of the Mediterranean World

Conveners

Elisabetta Benigni (Zukunftsphilologie–Fellow 2011-2012)

Michael Allan (EUME–Fellow 2011-2012)

Description

In recent years, a wealth of scholarship has attempted to reframe the geographical grounds of literary analysis. Where previously the nation-state was the category through which texts would be contextualized, scholars have begun focusing trans-nationally on literary geography, shifting from national territories to consider maritime regions, trade routes, and intersecting zones of cultural interaction. This revised approach questions the conventional borders of cultures, nations, and literary traditions, and emphasizes the importance of history and cultural analysis in national and comparative literature. Authors such as Ferdinand Braudel, Immanuel Wallerstein and Margaret Cohen offer models for engaging the dynamics of cultural interaction, questions of value and power, and the trafficking of commodities across regions. And the Mediterranean, in particular, figures centrally in these discussions on account of its history of overlapping and intersecting languages, cultures and traditions. To contextualize in the Mediterranean region is necessarily to place translation, transformation and transculturation in the foreground of textual analysis. Shuttling between discussions of lingua franca, the shared language of commerce and cultural interaction, and the role of the sea in literary geography, the Mediterranean world literalizes many of the concepts now integral to literary study, especially as it overlaps with transnationalism, transregionalism and ocean studies.

Our workshop aims to analyze the literature of the Mediterranean world as more than the sum of its parts—and as more than the relation between text and context. By emphasizing the shifting relations of the Mediterranean, we hope to supplement strictly philological discussions of language and literature with considerations of the intercultural dynamics of textual encounters. Our workshop is imagined, on the one hand, as a sort of exploration of literatures across the region, but it is also meant to hit centrally on the problem of transnational and transcultural textual analysis. Is there a literary lingua franca grounding the terms of literature, aesthetics and art in the Mediterranean? What was the role of languages such as Arabic, Maltese, Italian and Portuguese in defining the Mediterranean as a space for cultural transfer? In what ways do different literary traditions intersect, overlap and influence one another? In what ways do these interactions and intersections occur, and is it possible to ground them geographically? Can we speak of a unity or cohesion of a Mediterranean canon? What is the status of the classical as a category for the analysis of Mediterranean literary traditions? Is there currency to the terms of the *nahda*, or Renaissance, in the Mediterranean context? Can we outline a particular South-European Arab-Mediterranean modernity, which emerged with the rise of national consciousnesses?

We invite participants to question specific texts in terms of what they tell us about the possibility – or not - of a Mediterranean context for philological and literary analysis. We will consider mapping the trajectories of languages not just in terms of linguistic communication, but also, and more important, in terms of cultural translation. How are texts not just linguistically, but also culturally transformed during their travels? In what ways do translations become important for certain periods? How have translations contributed to the transnational standardization of certain key concepts, values and texts?

Format

The structure of the workshop is meant to highlight the work of a diverse group of scholars. Each session will provide for a rich combination of lecture and discussion with the goal of linking our conversation over the course of the entire workshop. Each of the speakers will have 30 minutes to present a paper, hopefully anchored around the analysis of a specific text, and the remaining 30 minutes of the session will be dedicated to discussion.

Schedule

Main Venue: Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, Villa Jaffé, Wallotstr. 10, 14193 Berlin
Thursday, May 24, 2012

10.00 - 10.30 Elisabetta Benigni & Michael Allan
Introduction

10.30 – 11:30 Karla Malette (University of Michigan)
Les sept sages vont en bateau: Framed Narrative Systems
in the Pre-Modern Mediterranean

11:30 – 12.00 Coffee Break

12.00 – 13.00 Giuseppe Mandalà (CCHS-CSIC, Madrid)
Before Dante: Visions of and Journeys to the Other World in the Italian Hebrew
Literature of the 13th Century

13.00 – 14.00 Lunch

14.00 – 15.00 Pier Mattia Tommasino (CCHS-CSIC, Madrid)
Traveling East, Writing in Italian: European Travel Literature to the Ottoman Empire
Written in Italian. The Case of Wojciech Bobowski

15.00 – 16.00 Joana Gomes (University of Porto)
From Ahmād ibn Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Rāzī to Mouro Rasis: Translation
and Cultural Dialogue in Medieval Iberia

16.00 – 16:30 Coffee Break

16.30– 17.30 Michel Kabalan (Freie Universität Berlin)
Encyclopedic Blueprints for an Arab Levantine Modernity: Butrus al-Bustānī
in His *Da'irat al-Ma'arif*

Friday, May 25, 2012

10.00 – 11.00 Charbel Dagher (Balamand University, Lebanon)
The Politics of the Picture Between the Sultan and the Notables
[Presentation in Arabic]

11.00 – 12.00 Abdelkebir Cherkaoui (Casablanca)
Greek Wisdom in Arabic Translation: The Translation of *Abrégé de la vie des plus illustres philosophes de l'Antiquité*
[Presentation in Arabic]

12.00 – 12.30 Coffee Break

12.30 – 13.30 Mohamed Dahi (University Mohamed V, Rabat)
The Arabic Reception of Miguel de Cervantes's Novel *Don Quixote*
[Presentation in Arabic]

13.30 – 14.30 Lunch

14.30 – 15.30 Elisabetta Benigni (Zukunftsphilologie–Fellow 2011-2012)
Dante's *Commedia* and the Construction of a Mediterranean Literary Space:
Revisiting a 20th Century Philological Debate

15.30 – 16.00 Coffee Break

16.00 – 17.00 Shaden Tageldin (University of Minnesota)
Fénelon's Gods, al-Tahtawi's Jinn: Trans-Mediterranean Fictionalities

Saturday, May 26, 2012

10.00 – 11.00 Maria Elena Paniconi (University of Macerata, Italy)
Italian Futurism in Cairo: Nelson Morpurgo across Two Shores of the Mediterranean

11.00 – 11.30 Coffee Break

11.30 – 12.30 Michael Allan (EUME–Fellow 2011-2012)
Between Entextualization and Hermeneutics: Jean-Joseph Marcel, *La Décade Égyptienne* and the Place of Reading in World Literature

12.30 – 13.30 Lunch

Abstracts and short biographies

Karla Malette

Les sept sages vont en bateau: Framed Narrative Systems in the Pre-modern Mediterranean

Framed narratives pose peculiar taxonomic problems for literary scholars. They moved widely in the pre-modern world; they were translated frequently and existed in multiple versions within languages as well. Distinct versions varied dramatically: the frame tale often remained largely stable, while the embedded stories changed in translation and in variant versions within languages. And the spotty manuscript record makes these traditions even more difficult to account for. Much of the transmission history – the record of translation from one language to another and of transmission within languages – has vanished without trace. Indeed, given the narrative instability and defective manuscript history of these textual traditions, it is difficult to conceive of them and plot their evolution as discrete and unified works of literature. This talk uses a variety of theoretical formulations to think about one framed narrative tradition in particular: the immensely popular work known as the Book of Sindbad in the east and the Seven Sages of Rome in the west. Drawing on contemporary political geographers for insight on the relations between language and territory, and using modern game theory to think about *chance* and medieval tales to talk about *fortune*, this paper studies one enigmatic narrative for what it reveals about communications between language systems in the pre-modern Mediterranean.

Karla Mallette is an Associate Professor of Italian and Near Eastern Studies and Director of the Center for European Studies at the University of Michigan. She works on pre-modern Mediterranean literary traditions, in particular on the intersections between late medieval Italian and Arabic literatures. She is the author of two books, *The Kingdom of Sicily, 1100-1250: A Literary History* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005) and *European Modernity and the Arab Mediterranean: Toward a New Philology and a Counter-Orientalism* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), and co-editor with Suzanne Akbari of *A Sea of Languages: Rethinking the Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History* (forthcoming from University of Toronto Press). She is now at work on a monograph studying premodern trans-regional and trans-historical language systems, tentatively entitled *Lingua Franca in the Mediterranean*.

Giuseppe Mandalà

Before Dante: Visions of and Journeys to the Other World in the Italian Hebrew Literature of the 13th Century

This paper focuses on the “Poem of the Basket” of Ahituv ben Yisḥaq of Palermo. Ahituv is a key figure for understanding Jewish cultural life in Sicily during the 13th century. This short poem describes a voyage to the other world, and it fits with the spread of Maimonidean thought in Sicily and South Italy. The aim of this paper is to examine the textual relationships of this text, placing it in the context of the cultural dynamics of Jewish literature of the Middle Ages.

Giuseppe Mandalà (PhD University of Firenze) has been fellow at the Warburg Institute in London; CNRS – LAMOP in Paris; Casa de Velázquez in Madrid. Presently, he is “Científico Titular” (Tenured Scientist) in “Transmisión cultural e historia de textos árabes, griegos y hebreos” at the Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) in Madrid. He works on Hebrew and Arabic literature and history of medieval Sicily. Among his last publications: “Un ambasciatore di Federico II in visita alle Piramidi: Berardo arcivescovo di Palermo (a. 1227)” (*Aevum* 85, 2, 2011); “Un codice arabo in caratteri ebraici dalla Trapani degli Abbate (Vat. ebr. 358)” (*Sefarad* 71, 1, 2011); “Il falconiere di Ögödey, i giardini del Minse e le colombe di Federico II. Frammenti di storia aviaria siciliana” (*Quaderni di Mediterranea – Ricerche storiche*, 17, 1).

Pier Mattia Tommasino

Traveling East, Writing in Italian: European Travel Literature to the Ottoman Empire Written in Italian. The Case of Wojciech Bobowski

The paper analyzes the use of Italian as a literary language in European travel literature in the Ottoman Empire during the late Renaissance. The choice of Italian will be explained as the link between the spread of Italian in Europe as a language of culture (poetry, music, art, architecture, etc.) and its practical uses in the Mediterranean as a diplomatic and commercial code or as a tool of religious propaganda. In the late Renaissance, travels to the Ottoman Empire were the continuation of the *peregrinatio academica* and the *Grand Tour* to Italy of high-educated European scholars. In this context, Italy was the main yardstick to describe the art and architecture of Istanbul as the virtues and vices of the Ottomans. In light of these premises, I will present different versions, both manuscripts and in print, of the multilingual *relatione* by the Polish Wojciech Bobowski (1610-1675), musician and dragoman in the Ottoman Empire, who wrote in Italian a description of the Topkapi Palace for European readers. The case of Bobowski, known in the Ottoman Empire as Ali Ufki, invites us to reconsider the impact of European culture in the construction of the multicultural and multilinguistic identity of the Ottoman Empire before its “Europeanization” during the 19th century. The aim is to underline how practical uses of Italian in the Mediterranean and European literary vogues were complementary aspects of the diffusion of Italian culture in the Euro-Mediterranean area until the middle of the 19th century. Moreover, it will allow us to reconsider the spread and transfer of languages associated to the Renaissance and to challenge long-standing historiographic clichés on the divide between East and West.

Pier Mattia Tommasino holds a PhD from the Scuola Normale Superiore of Pisa (Italy). He is currently post-doctoral researcher at the Institute of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures (CCHS-CSIC) in Madrid. He is former fellow at Villa I Tatti (Harvard, Florence, 2010-2011), and at the Fondazione Cini/Centro Vittore Branca (Venice, 2011-2012). His research focuses on the linguistic, textual, bibliographical and religious relations between Italy and the Muslim World, especially on the Italian and Latin translations of the Qur’an and on the diffusion of Italian language and books in the Mediterranean (16th/17th century).

Joana Gomes

From Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Mūsa al-Rāzī to Mouro Rasis: Translation and Cultural Dialogue in Medieval Iberia

The Iberia of the Middle Ages was an ideal space for the onset and elaboration of an extensive translation movement initially from Arabic into Latin and then into the rapidly emerging vernacular languages. The aim of this paper is to tackle questions related to historiography and its intercultural dynamics by looking at an earlier Arabic work of history, “*Akhbār Mulūk al-Andalus*,” translated into Portuguese in the beginning of the 14th century. The work is attributed to Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Mūsa al-Rāzī (887-955 AD), who was also known by the Portuguese name of Mouro Rasis. Although lost in its integral Latin version, it survived in Arabic in extended fragments in the historiographical works of Ibn Bassām (?-1147 AD), Ibn al-Athīr (1160-1233 AD) and al-Maqqarī (1578–1632 AD) among others. The work of Al-Rāzī will be used as a primeval prototype to highlight some of the problems of historiographical writing and to raise major questions related to the possibility of considering historical writing as a transcultural phenomenon in the context of translation from Arabic to Latin and/or vernacular in the Iberian Peninsula.

Maria Joana Matos Gomes graduated with an MA in medieval Portuguese literature from the Universidade do Porto in 2005. She is a full time researcher in the Seminário Medieval de Literatura, Pensamento e Sociedade at the Instituto de Filosofia da Universidade do Porto in Portugal, where she studies Iberian medieval narratives and historiographies. Since 2008, she is FCT doctoral student and her dissertation is on the competing imagery of the King Alfonso VI of León-Castile in Latin and Romance historiographical treatises produced between the 12th and 14th century AD.

Michel Kabalan

Encyclopedic Blueprints for an Arab Levantine Modernity: Butrus al-Bustānī in His *Da'irat al-Ma'arif*

In a visionary pamphlet entitled “*I'lan al-Kawthar*” (1874), Butrus al-Bustānī (1819-1883) announced to the large readership of his bi-weekly *al-Jinan* the upcoming project that would revolutionize access to knowledge in the rapidly growing city of Beirut. As a matter of fact, the *Encyclopédie Arabe* (1876-1900) was a magnum opus that emerged out of the premises of what I will call “*scriptorium Bustanii*” where al-Bustānī himself supervised and concerted the efforts of numerous writers and educators working either in his 'national school' or in his newspapers. By design, *Da'irat al-Ma'arif* took the form of a thematic universal dictionary *qamus 'am li kul matlab* that epistemologically explores instances from both East and West while highlighting the important transformations that were happening in the Levantine cultural space. Thus, urgent questions of an imminent modernization (urban, cultural, linguistic, political, etc) constantly preoccupied the writers of *al-Da'irat* and made them pioneer an epoch-forming writing style that is still widely used.

The aim of this presentation will be to explore the links between the “scriptorium Bustanii” and the Western encyclopedias of the time and how we could ground the intersection and the influence of the later on the former.

Michel Kabalan graduated from the American University in Beirut in 2002 with a BS in Biology and in 2006 with an MA in Philosophy (thesis entitled: A Critique of Cultural Essentialism in Contemporary Arab Thought). His main focus was the study of contemporary Arab thinkers from Taha Hussein to Mohammad Abed Al-Jabiri along with analytic philosophy. He worked as an assistant to the director of the Anis Makdissi Program in Literature (AMPL) at AUB in the academic year 2004/2005 and he was a regular contributor to the Lebanese daily *Al-Nahar* between 2001 and 2006. Since 2007, he is a DAAD doctoral student and is writing his thesis on Butrus al-Bustani's *Da'irat al-Ma'arif* at the Institut für Arabistik at Freie Universität Berlin.

Charbel Dagher

The Politics of the Picture Between the Sultan and the Notables [Presentation in Arabic]

The image of God and the image of the caliph in the period of prophecy and during the Umayyad dynasty constituted a problematic issue. If they were not completely prohibited, practices of figurative representations in paintings and coins were generally disliked. This issue changed during the time of the Ottoman sultanate. It is well known that since the very beginning of the rise of the Ottoman empire, the Sultan accepted having his portrait drawn by Italian artists. The impetus for this change was primarily diplomatic, but it soon changed during the subsequent centuries, so that the art of painting flourished in its various aspects.

The paper will explore the introduction of the art of the picture, especially that of the portrait, into the houses of princes and notables in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman empire. It will examine the reasons and the significance of the increase in demand for portraits. Finally, it will explore the effects of this phenomenon on the rise of modern Arab art.

Charbel Dagher is Professor and Chair of the Department of Arabic at Balamand University in Lebanon. He has written numerous books on poetry, literary criticism, aesthetics, translation, and Islamic art and architecture. Some of his studies on ancient and modern arts have been translated into English, German and French. An accomplished poet, he has published a number of poetry collections: "Crumbs of Whiteness", "Anointment", "An Eastern Bed", "Night Woodsman", "Parsing of a figure", "The other as my being", "Don't go searching for meaning, perhaps it will come to you", "My words give birth to myself", and "Tranzit". He also serves as a consultant on Islamic art and modern plastic arts, and has published numerous academic studies on aesthetics and the history of art, including "Art and Identity", "Theories of Beauty in Arabic culture," "Islamic art in Arabic sources," "Art and Orient" (2 volumes), "Oil and Canvas" and others.

Abdelkebir Cherkaoui

Greek Wisdom in Arabic Translation: The Translation of *Abrégé de la vie des plus illustres philosophes de l'Antiquité* [Presentation in Arabic]

The aim of this contribution is to examine two important and rather neglected fields in the studies of interaction of literatures and cultures. First, I will deal with the problems and methods of the Arabic translation of so-called Greek "wisdom literature" in the nineteenth century by studying a text translated from French in 1836 (*Mukhtasar tarjamat mashahir qudama' al falasifa*). This case will lead us to reflect upon the tradition of wisdom literature in Arabic and its importance as a model that shows the passage and travels of patterns of cultures across different regions.

Abdelkebir Cherkaoui is Professor of Arabic Literature at several Moroccan universities, where he teaches Arabic literary criticism and Translation Studies. An Arabic translator, he has published Arabic translations of French literary criticism and francophone literature as well as several studies on Arabic literature and the history of Arabic translation. His recent research explores the theory and practice of pre-modern Arabic translations, and particularly the medieval Arabic translations of the Greek and Persian epics, the 19th-century versified rendering of the *Iliad* by Sulaymān al-Bustānī and the translation of Aristotele's *Rhetorica*.

Mohamed Dahi

The Arabic Reception of Miguel de Cervantes's Novel *Don Quixote* [Presentation in Arabic]

This paper will focus on the Arabic reception of Miguel de Cervantes's novel *Don Quixote*. *Don Quixote* has assumed world-literary recognition for its vivid depiction of the historical and social realities that the Spanish experienced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Understood as a point of entry to modernity in its various political, literary and narrative manifestations, the novel has also attracted the interest of Arab intellectuals for numerous reasons. The paper will discuss the various Arabic translations of *Don Quixote* (in Morocco, Egypt, and Syria) as well as the literary works (plays, short stories and poetry) that have been inspired by it and added to its literary and historical value, particularly those which concern the representation of the Muslim Arab self. The study will also shed light on the ways in which Arab literary criticism has dealt with this work in different historical periods, most particularly how it probes the shared Arabic cultural heritage with the Spanish world from a Mediterranean perspective.

Mohamed Dahi is Professor of Semiotics and Criticism at the Faculty of Letters at University Mohamed V of Rabat (Morocco). He is also a member of the Moroccan Writers Union and on the editorial board of many Arabic periodicals. He participated in conferences and seminars both in the Arab world and in Europe. His numerous Arabic publications include: *Representation of the Self and the Other* (2012), *The Semiotics of Narrative* (2010), *The Poetics of Intellectual Autobiography* (2008), *Ambivalent Truth* (2006), *The Semiotics of Novelistic Language* (2006) (awarded the Morocco Studying Literature prize).

Elisabetta Benigni

Dante's *Commedia* and the Construction of a Mediterranean Literary Space: Revisiting a 20th Century Philological Debate

During the first decades of the twentieth century, the first translations of Dante's *Commedia* into Arabic began to appear. In the same decades, a lively debate spread across the Mediterranean, where a number of extremely relevant questions in the frame of Arabic and Romance philologies were raised: what did Dante owe the Medieval Arab world? Was his travelogue to the afterlife inspired by Arabic and Islamic sources? This debate, which thrived in particular in the context of the philological and orientalist traditions of Spain and Italy, emerged parallel to and simultaneously with an equally significant, although lesser-known, Arabic intellectual debate. These questions, revolving on the disputed origins of the *Commedia*, were negotiated against the background of a specific historical epoch: namely, the formation of national identities in the Arab world and the strive for national self-recognition in Southern Europe. By revisiting this well-known debate about the circulation of topoi and literary tropes across the Mediterranean, this paper attempts to examine the Arabic rendering of the *Commedia* between the politics of appropriation and the practice of philology. More than just an example of a Western masterpiece translated into Arabic, the case of Dante's *Commedia* epitomizes a controversial cultural debate over the conceptualization of the Mediterranean as a literary space.

Elisabetta Benigni received her PhD in Historical and Philological Studies of the Islamic and Arab World from the University Sapienza in Rome in 2009. Since then, she has taught in various Italian universities. She is currently Zukunftsphilologie-Fellow at the Forum Transregionale Studien in Berlin. Her research focuses on a range of topics: Comparative Literature in the Mediterranean context (transmission of texts, translations and cross-influence), boundary-crossing and religious conversion, prison and resistance literature and literary translations. She has published on various topics, including *adab al-sujun* (prison literature) in modern Arabic literature (La Sapienza Orientale, Nuova Cultura, Roma, 2009), on the translation of Dante's *Commedia* into Arabic (*Critica del testo*, XIV / 3) and on the theory of literature and literary genres in Arabic and Western traditions (*Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, n. 84, 2012). As a fellow of Zukunftsphilologie, she is working on her project "Conversion and Translation in the Early Modern Mediterranean World". By focusing her attention on the work and the legacy of Anselm Turmeda, aka Abdullah al-Turjuman (1355-1423), her attempt is to rethink this controversial Franciscan friar, poet, Muslim polemicist and translator in the broader context the Mediterranean world of the fourteenth and fifteenth century in its cultural entanglements and historical possibilities. Her study also engages with the wide circulation of Turmeda's manuscripts and with their various extant translations and abridgments across Europe and the Middle East. In her analysis, she aims to give special attention to the topic of circulation of knowledge and to the role of translators and converts in the making of a Mediterranean lingua franca.

Shaden M. Tageldin

Fénelon's Gods, al-Tahtawi's Jinn: Trans-Mediterranean Fictionalities

Reading Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi's 1850s Arabic translation (published 1867) of François Fénelon's *Aventures de Télémaque* against the realist impulses of nineteenth-century British and French literary comparatism, this paper posits al-Tahtawi's translation as a transformational moment in the reception of the "European" literary tradition in the Arab-Islamic world. Arguing that the ancient Greek gods who populate Fénelon's 1699 sequel to Homer's *Odyssey* are analogous to Muslim jinn—spirits of smokeless fire understood to be real—al-Tahtawi rewrites what Muslims long had dismissed as pagan "fiction" as Islamized "truth," thereby adroitly negotiating a crisis of comparison and mediating a literary-epistemic sea change in modern Arabic fiction. Indeed, the "untrue" gods of the Greeks (and of French literature) turn not just real but historically referential: al-Tahtawi's translation speaks to the real-historical world of 1850s Egypt, exhorting an unjust Ottoman-Egyptian sovereign to heed lessons that Fénelon's original once had addressed to French royalty. Catherine Gallagher has defined the fictionality specific to the modern European novel as neither pure deceit nor pure truth. How might al-Tahtawi's rehabilitation of the mythological as the supernatural/historical "real"—and of the "blasphemous" as the secular/sacred—invite us to rethink both novelization and modern literary comparatism in a trans-Mediterranean frame?

Shaden M. Tageldin is an Associate Professor of Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature at the University of Minnesota. A specialist in nineteenth- and twentieth-century literatures in Arabic, English, and French, she earned her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of California, Berkeley, and in 2006–2007 was a Europe in the Middle East—The Middle East in Europe-Postdoctoral Fellow. Her research and teaching engage empire and postcolonial studies, critical translation theory, and the politics and ideologies of language and literature. Tageldin's first book, *Disarming Words: Empire and the Seductions of Translation in Egypt*, was published by the University of California Press in 2011. She is currently at work on a second book, provisionally titled *Toward a Transcontinental Theory of Modern Comparative Literature*.

Maria Elena Paniconi

Italian Futurism in Cairo: Nelson Morpurgo across Two Shores of the Mediterranean

Italian Futurism is highly renowned as a trans-national movement. This contribution will shed light on the almost unknown futurist presence in Egypt, particularly focusing on the founder of the "Futurist Movement in Egypt", the Italian lawyer Nelson Morpurgo. Based on the literary and the autobiographical works by Nelson Morpurgo and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and on the personal archive of Morpurgo's granddaughter, this paper rethinks the question of the intimate cultural relationships between Italian and Egyptian intellectuals during the first decades of the 20th century. After an overview on Morpurgo's biography, the cultural activities promoted by this figure during his stay in Cairo will be explored.

The paper will address Morpurgo's particular bilingualism: as an eminent member of the Italian Community in Egypt and as a brilliant advocate of Futurism, Morpurgo developed a double-coded language for the Italians in Egypt and for the cosmopolitan *milieu*. Furthermore, Morpurgo's activity as cultural 'mediator' will be taken into account through an analysis of his autobiographical memories on Marinetti's visits in Egypt.

Maria Elena Paniconi is a Permanent Lecturer in Arabic Language and Literature at the University of Macerata (Italy) and is currently a Visiting Scholar at the IMES Institute (Edinburgh University). She obtained her PhD at Ca' Foscari University of Venice and was a Sultan Program Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Berkeley (February–July 2008). Among her publications: "Al-Faryaq in al-Saq 'ala al-saq: Genesis, Transformation and Formation of a Fictional Character" in Nadia al Baghdadi, Barbara Winckler (eds.): *Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq and the Advent of Modernity*, Edinburgh UP, forthcoming; "Nelson Morpurgo e il movimento futurista in Egitto tra internazionalismo cosmopolita e appartenenza coloniale" In Poli, Diego e Melosi, Laura: *I Linguaggi del Futurismo*, 2010, EUM Edizioni, Macerata. She is the translator of *Lan tatakallama lughati* by Abdelfattah Kilito into Italian.

Michael Allan

Between Entextualization and Hermeneutics: Jean-Joseph Marcel, *La Décade Égyptienne* and the Place of Reading in World Literature

On July 29th, 1799, a letter from the French engineer Michelange Lancret announced the unearthing of the Rosetta Stone during the construction of Fort Julien in the Nile Delta. Even though it took the labors of Thomas Young and Jean-Francois Champollion to realize the full significance of the discovery, the announcement already marked the terms of a discipline concerned with acquiring knowledge through the accumulation of artifacts. It is this discipline that provided a framework through which this particular object, a slab of black granite inscribed with demotic, hieroglyphics and Greek, would become a text, a set of signs to be deciphered as a key to the translation of a lost language. My paper traces the story of the Rosetta Stone by focusing on the labors of one particular French savant, Jean-Joseph Marcel. Marcel's entry in *La Décade Égyptienne* initially framed the object as a text, and his work with print culture assisted in making the text available to readers across the Mediterranean region. Using a special casting method, Marcel extracted the content of the stone's surface and made of it a sort of reproducible print, entextualizing what was written on the object and leveling the three languages as translational equivalents.

By focusing on the implicit tension between text and object, translation and hermeneutics, my paper addresses the Rosetta Stone as a problem of where literature takes place. It notes the birth of a philological consciousness and the phenomenological leveling of language, and points at the same time to the limits of literary geography in world literature.

Michael Allan is an Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Oregon and currently a EUME–Fellow at the Forum Transregionale Studien in Berlin. He was previously a Townsend Fellow at the Humanities Center at the University of California at Berkeley (2006-7) and a member of the Society of Fellows at Columbia University (2008-9). His research focuses on colonialism, secularization and the formation of modern reading practices in Africa and the Middle East, and draws from methods in anthropology, film and visual culture, religion, and postcolonial studies. He is currently finishing his first book, *Inventing World Literature*, which focuses on a history of reading and transformations of literary culture in colonial Egypt—at the intersection of the French, Ottoman and British empires. His most recent publications include: “Deserted Histories: The Lumière Brothers in Egypt,” “Reading with One Eye, Speaking with One Tongue: On the Problem of Address in World Literature” (awarded the A. Owen Aldridge Prize by the American Comparative Literature Association), “Fanon and the Flesh of Language: Towards a Material Linguistics of Colonial Subjection,” and “The Location of Lebanon: Portraits and Places in the Videography of Jayce Salloum.” His article, “Queer Couplings: Formations of Religion and Sexuality in ‘Ala’ al-Aswani’s *‘Imarat Ya’qubyan*,” is forthcoming in the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*.

Zukunftsphilologie: Revisiting the Canons of Textual Scholarship

Zukunftsphilologie aspires to support research in marginalized and undocumented textual practices and literary cultures with the aim of integrating texts and scholarly traditions from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East as well as from Europe itself. The project takes as its point of departure the increasingly growing concern with the global significance of philology and the potential of philology to challenge exclusivist notions of the self and the canon.

The project **Zukunftsphilologie** endeavours to promote and emphasize primary textual scholarship beyond the classical humanistic canon by a critical recuperation of philology. In an age of advanced communication, intellectual specialization and unprecedented migration of knowledge and people, the discipline of philology assumes new relevance. The project draws on the recent calls for a return to philology as particularly emphasized by Sheldon Pollock in his essay Future Philology? The Fate of A Soft Science in a Hard World and the late Edward Said's essay The Return to Philology.

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

Information

www.zukunftsphilologie.de

www.forum-transregionale-studien.de

www.fsgs.fu-berlin.de/fsgs/kooperationen/Zukunftsphilologie

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