

## Workshop

### A New Start?

### Libyan History and Historiography at a Time of Historical Transition

**June 8-9, 2012**

Zentrum Moderner Orient, Kirchweg 33, 14129 Berlin, Germany

Convened by

**Mostafa Minawi** (EUME-Fellow 2011/12)

#### Participants:

**Mohammed Edeek** (University of Tripoli)

**Emna Elaoui** (ENAU, Tunis)

**Güneş Işıksel** (Collège de France, Paris)

**Suad Mohammed al-Jaffal** (University of Tripoli)

**Jakob Kraus** (Freie Universität Berlin)

**Nora Lafi** (ZMO)

**Mostafa Minawi** (EUME-Fellow 2011/12)

**Eileen Ryan** (Columbia University)

**Henning Sievert** (Universität Bonn)

**Ebubekir Subaşı** (The Prime Ministerial Ottoman Archives, Istanbul)

**Salaheddin H. Sury** (Centre for National Archives and Historical Studies, Tripoli)

**Knut S. Vikør** (University of Bergen)

#### Description:

This workshop aims to bring together historians working in the area of Libyan history in order to reflect on their own research in relation to the past, present and future of Libyan historiography. In particular, Libyan and non-Libyan historians will discuss and debate the ways the toppling of the 40-year-old Gadhafi regime will impact the writing and re-writing of Libyan history as well as their own research and publication. Some of the questions that will be tabled are:

What do we really know about 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Libya? What are the historical connections between Benghazi (east), Tripoli (west) and Fezzan (south)?

How are the Libyan coastal cities tied to Saharan and sub-Saharan Africa? What socio-political events of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century have helped to shape contemporary Libyan social and political structure? How has historical research and knowledge production been organized and deployed in the past, and how do we envision the regime change to impact the state of Libyan history and historiography in the near future?

**Context:**

Recent events have thrust Libya into the spotlight. Since the early days of the revolution in Benghazi in February of 2011, international media outlets have scrambled to piece together a picture of the country, which until then has had a one-dimensional representation. In the past, popular media has consistently portrayed Libya, one of Africa's largest and most culturally diverse countries, as a simple reflection of its former leader, Mu'ammarr Gadhafi. In a struggle to understand the roots of the revolution and the conflict between pro- and anti-Gadhafi forces, self-identified experts on the history of Libya played up the so-called historical divide between the East West and South of the country; the "unnatural" formation of the Libyan nation-state; and the war between Libya and Chad. Moreover, many of these predictions that were supposedly based on Libyan history were used as a justification for the intervention (or inaction) of foreign and local powers alike.

Now, as Libyans begin the task of envisioning a new future for Libya, the importance of scholarship on Libya's past becomes especially important. At this critical junction, the past becomes almost as important as the present moment, allowing for a rare opportunity to reconsider conventional telling of history as a way of allowing for an image of a new Libya begins to emerge. The proposed workshop is a start of an academic conversation on the wider history and historiography of Libya, with the aim of bringing together scholars of 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century-Libya in order to address certain questions about the complex history of Libya through the participants' past and current academic research. Historians working within Ottoman, Arab, African and Colonial frameworks will come together in the spirit of transcending the boundaries of area studies, and the regional academic silos. Scholars from the wider Middle East, Europe, Africa, and North America will briefly discuss their research in a two-day workshop meant at bridging the academic divide of regional scholarship, with the aim of starting a very timely conversation on the past with the aim of better understanding today's scholarly challenges. Most importantly, we will use this workshop as an occasion to turn the spotlight on historical research on Libya, in its multi-dimensional complexity, in a forum divorced from the often-utilitarian aims of popular media sound bites and the ready-made explanations for historically-rooted and often-complex contemporary social, economic, and political conditions.

## Schedule:

**Main Venue: Zentrum Moderner Orient, Kirchweg 33, 14129 Berlin in the main conference room**

### Friday, June 8, 2012

10.00 - 10.30 Tea and coffee / meet and greet

10.30 - 11.00

#### **Opening Remarks and Introduction**

Mostafa Minawi (Eume-Fellow 2011/12) & Nora Lafi (ZMO)

11.00 – 12.30

#### **Panel 1: New Approaches to Colonial History in Libya**

Presenters: Eileen Ryan (Columbia University) and Jakob Kraus (Freie Universität Berlin)

Moderator: Nora Lafi (ZMO)

12.30 – 14.00

Lunch at ZMO (for workshop participants)

14.00 – 15.30

#### **Panel 2: European - Tripolitanian Relations in the 19th century**

Presenters: Suad Mohammad al-Jaffal (University of Tripoli) and Mahmoud ed-Deek (University of Tripoli)

Moderator: Mostafa Minawi (EUME-Fellow 2011/12)

15.30 – 16.00

Coffee Break

16.00 – 17.30

#### **Panel 3: Between the Local and the Imperial in the Writing of History**

Presenters: Kunt Vikor (University of Bergen) and Mostafa Minawi (EUME Fellow 2011/12)

Moderator: Florian Reidler (ZMO)

18.30 – 20.30

Dinner (for workshop participants)

### Saturday, June 9, 2012

10.00 - 10.30 Tea and coffee

10.30 – 12.00

#### **Panel 4: Late Ottoman Stakes in Tripolitania**

Presenters: Hennig Sievert (University of Bonn) and Güneş Işıksel (Collège de France)

Moderator: Elke Hartmann (Freie Universität Berlin)

12.00 – 13.30

Lunch at ZMO (for workshop participants)

13.30 – 15.00

#### **Panel 5: State and Archives: Politics and Scholarly Pursuits**

Presenters: Salaheddin Sury (CNARHS, Tripoli) and Ebubekir Subaşı (BOA, Istanbul)

Moderator: Adam Mestyan (EUME-Fellow 2011/12)

15.00 – 15.30

Coffee Break

15.30 – 17.00

#### **Panel 6: Putting the Libyan South in Focus**

Presenters: Nora Lafi (ZMO) and Emna el-Aouani (ENAU, Tunis)

Moderator: Chanfi Ahmed (ZMO)

## Abstracts and Short Biographies

**Mohammed Edeek**, University of Tripoli, Tripoli, Libya

### **Aspects of the European Diplomatic Relations during the Ottoman Epoch**

In the nineteenth century the relations between Libya and the Europeans were swinging between peace and war and the geographical and strategic location of Libya as a transit point encouraged European traders to establish consulates in the coastal cities, and to appoint diplomatic representatives to protect their nationals and trade interests. The notion of "ambassador" has a special significance in the political life of Libya thought it did assign permanent representatives in the European capitals. The diplomatic representation was not equal between the ottoman provinces and the European countries, as it was limited to the presence at the center of imperial power in Istanbul in return for the presence of Ottoman ambassadors in some European capitals. The Ottoman state used to see that any tolerance of the presence of consulates of its provinces in Europe would encourage some rulers to separate from the body of the state.

The Mediterranean Sea witnessed conflicts of interests between France and Great Britain which led to change in the map of North Africa, particularly through the French campaign on Egypt (1798-1801). When Napoleon entered into war with Britain and the Ottomans, the sultan requested from Yusuf Karamanli to join this coalition and to break off his relations with France. However, Yusuf Karamanli answered positively to the request of Napoleon to assure him a way to receive mail through the Libyan territory and to procure provisions to the French army from Malta. However, the British political pressures on Yusuf Pasha forced this Karamanli-French alliance later to break off and to chase away the French consul from Tripoli.

The emergence of political crisis that blew away the Karamanli rulers was due to internal factors; the most important of which were the policy of extravagance and profligacy adopted by the ruling family that led to debts incurred to European traders. This created a diplomatic crisis with the European consuls who started to exert pressures on those fighting each other for power urging them to pay back the debts of their nationals at the risk of military intervention. Thus the country entered into in chaos and civil war from 1832 to 1835 between the Karamanli brothers. However, the Ottoman government considered the deteriorating situation of the province and re-exerted direct power over it in a moment of inattention on the part of European fleets in the Mediterranean Sea. After the restoration of the direct dependence of Tripoli to Istanbul, the central Ottoman authority started to execute some reforms from 1835 to 1911.

**Dr. Mohammed Edeek** is a Professor of Modern and Contemporary History at the University of Tripoli and a Researcher at the History Department at the National Center for Archives and Historical Studies. He is a prolific author with dozens of publications on Libyan Modern history and politics.

---

**Emna Elaouani**, National School of Architecture and Town Planning, Tunis, Tunisia.

### **Towards a Specific Modernity of the Space in Ghadames: Urban and Architectural Analysis of the Historic City**

My research aims to question the physical space of the city of Ghadames, an outstanding example of a traditional settlement which has been a focal point of the Saharan landscape for thousands of years, and which constitutes a singular example of urban space with its covered streets expressing a magnificent play with light and shade.

If we consider the architectural and the urban space as cultural objects of history allowing cohabitation, and if we notice that the old city of Ghadames was inhabited until the 1980's, we can easily think about the architectural tendency of "Critical Regionalism" as an adequate alternative to produce modern space. Indeed, this movement aims to find a balance between cultural identity and modernity. However, Critical Regionalism is not traditionalism or historicity, with the use of traditional elements. It's a reference to the "origins" that sticks to scientific and technique rationality without renouncing traditional culture. In addition, this movement supposes an "anti-centrist" feeling and an aspiration to an economical, political and cultural independence on one hand, and a considerable production of buildings on the other hand. Is it so utopian for Libya today with its historical context?

I don't think so.

I think that an architectural analysis of the city, focusing on the use of space, the construction techniques, and history, should be done in order to have a contextual understanding of the objects. According to this approach, we can notice that Ghadames is a particular city setting up on the caravan road, located at the triple junction of Libyan, Tunisian, and Algerian borders, and constituting a transition between the Sahara, the Nefouza Mountain and the coastal region. This particularity appears on several different levels: urban, cultural and architectural. It's interesting to see the impact on space of the travelling construction traditions in the south, rather than on the coast cities: the use of mud brick architecture can be seen in Sanaâ in a similar way to the decoration of interior spaces in Saharian countries. It's also interesting to note how much the space is codified according to the local society, and to highlight the richness of the elements representing the weaving together into the urban space. The refined irrigation system provided by 'Ain el-Faras, Ghadames's main water source, is one of the more sophisticated examples of the co-existence that demonstrates the urban sociability of the Ghadamsi population. Thus, the society shares and codifies the urban space, but not the architectural one.

I will argue that understanding the traditional space is necessary when we want to produce a modern one, because if we try to impose new architectural and social forms without taking care of the context, it will necessary be a disaster, the international architecture of the XX century has demonstrated that at a high cost.

**Emna Elaouni** is an architect and an assistant professor of architecture at the National School of Architecture and Town Planning in Tunis. She is interested in the theme of housing and specific modernities. She is currently preparing her tenure on "context and modernity in the architectural and urban space in Tunis".

---

Güneş Işıksel, Collège de France, Paris, France

### Ottoman Investments in Libya in the Turn of Twentieth Century

Although the Ottoman government's interest in Libya rose considerably both in terms of infrastructural investments and of geopolitical attention in the period following the demise of the Karamanlı dynasty – which coincides, not surprisingly, with the implementation of reforms period in the administrative structure of the Empire – the Ottoman intellectuals' concern for the region was relatively inconsequential.

This first (and the last) Ottoman deputy of Fezzan, Abdülkadir Cami [Baykurt] (1877-1949), who was neither from the region, nor from any Ottomano-Maghrebian social origin, but a fellow from Istanbul with typical Young-Turk background (middle class ethos, military school education, anti-Hamidian political activism with reference to French Third Republic values) – is, however, not only a connoisseur of the politico-administrative problems of the region, but also a keen observer of sociological structure of the Sahara, if not an amateur ethnographer.

This paper's aim is, on the one hand, to scrutinize the reasons of this disinterest in a time when the "Ottoman Oriental Travel" literature gains an important pace, and on the other, to present unfairly neglected writings on Libya of the deputy of Fezzan in the Ottoman Assembly between 1908 and 1912.

Güneş Işıksel is the chief-librarian at the Bibliothèque des études arabes, turques et islamiques of the Collège de France and will defend her PhD Thesis in June, 2012.

Suad Mohammed al-Jaffal, University of Tripoli, Tripoli, Libya

العلاقات الاقتصادية بين ولاية طرابلس الغرب وألمانيا في الفترة 1884-1911

يعد الاقتصاد عصب الحياة علي مدي العصور التاريخية ، كما انه مرتبط بالسياسة ارتباطاً وثيقاً ، فتبعاً لذلك فإن القوة والتطور السياسي ينعكس ايجابياً على الجانب الاقتصادي ويفتح آفاقاً جديدة أمام الدول .

إن هذا الواقع ينطبق علي ما كان يحدث في ألمانيا التي شهدت نمواً سريعاً حتم عليها إيجاد أفق جديد لدعم مؤسساتها الاقتصادية في الداخل وذلك من أجل تصريف إنتاجها وتوفير المواد الأولية التي تحتاجها من الخارج .

**كيف أثر هذا التطور علي التوجهات الاقتصادية الألمانية ؟ وفي أي إطار كان التعاون الاقتصادي بين ألمانيا وليبيا ؟ وهل كان للسياسة دور بارز في توجيه تلك العلاقات ؟**

إن القفزة النوعية التي حققتها ألمانيا جعلت المستشار بسمارك يخضع للرأي العام الألماني القائل بضرورة أن يكون لبلادهم مكان إلى جانب بقية الدول الأوروبية في القارات الأخرى، وقد بدأ فعلاً منذ سنة 1884 في تشجيع أبناء بلده على امتلاك أراضي خارج ألمانيا، وتشجيع التجار في إنشاء مشاريع اقتصادية كبيرة باسم بلادهم.

وقد اعتبرت ألمانيا منطقة الشمال الأفريقي مجالاً حيويًا لتطوير مشاريعها الاقتصادية، وتركزت سياستها علي طرابلس الغرب الخاضعة للدولة العثمانية آنذاك فقد اتخذ النشاط التجاري بها منحاً تدريجياً كان في البداية بسيطاً ثم أخذ ينمو تدريجياً حيث شهد الربع الأخير من القرن التاسع عشر نشاطاً ألمانياً مكثفاً في هذه الولاية العثمانية على يد بعض التجار الذين أخذوا يوسعون أعمالهم فيها، حيث بدأ حجم المشاريع الألمانية فيها يتسع مما أدى إلي تشجيع الكثير من أبناء ألمانيا على السفر والهجرة إلى ولاية طرابلس الغرب .

ومن خلال قراءة اللوائح وما ورد فيها من معلومات يبدو واضحاً أن تطور العلاقات السياسية الألمانية مع ولاية طرابلس الغرب كان له انعكاساً ايجابياً علي الجانب الاقتصادي وساهم بتطوير الحركة التجارية بين الطرفين ومثلت ركيزة أساسية في التعاملات التجارية .

ولابد من الإشارة هنا إلي تقاطع المصالح الألمانية مع الأطماع الإيطالية في ليبيا والتي شهدت تنافسا أثر سلباً علي مركز ألمانيا في ليبيا .

وقد اعتمدت الدراسة علي عدد من المصادر مثل الوثائق الألمانية علي جانب وثائق المركز الوطني للمحفوظات والدراسات التاريخية وعدد من المراجع ذات العلاقة

**Suad Mohammed al-Jaffal** has a Bachelor of Arts in history from al-Nasser University in Libya, and a Masters in History from the University of Tripoli. She is currently working on her PhD dissertation on the topic of Triplitanian-German relations between 1884-1918 at the University of Tripoli. She has participated in several conferences and authored a book based on her Masters thesis titled *The Libyan-Tunisian Relations During the Ottoman Period (1835-1911)*.

---

**Jakob Kraiss**, Freie Universität, Berlin, Germany

### **The Italo-Ottoman War and Colonial Libya: A Hundred Years of Historical Writing**

The Italo-Ottoman War of 1911/12 was one of the first modern media wars. Many historians think it was not least the colonialist campaign conducted by Italian publicists that led the Giolitti government to declaring war. Operations were extensively covered by journalists, and – as one scholar put it – it seems as if each of these journalists later published a book on the war. In Italian historiography the war of 1911/12 has remained maybe the most researched topic regarding colonial Libya (from Manfroni and Roncagli's "official" study, dating from the colonial period itself, to the works of Maltese, Romano and others to recent publications marking the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the war). But even though the writer Renato Serra already in 1912 had advocated a comprehensive study of the events that would do justice to the experiences of everyone involved, the research undertaken so far focuses almost exclusively on military and diplomatic aspects. Apart from that, what Italian historians generally missed are both the Ottoman and the Libyan perspectives, placing events instead in the context of Italian domestic politics during the Giolitti era or the international (i.e. European) diplomatic preliminaries to World War I. Libyan studies, on the other hand, tend to emphasize resistance to colonialism. Thereby they are not so much interested in the war between two Powers of the time, but rather in the resistance movement led by Libyans themselves (even Rahuma's study on the Italo-Ottoman War speaks instead of a Turco-Libyan resistance). In fact, it might be surprising that a war which led to an only nominal occupation should have received much more attention from the Italian side than the history of actual conquest and resistance (which figures prominently in Libyan historiography). Such considerations might question periodization that singles out a time of war, lasting one year, whereas, for Libyans, fighting continued for almost the entire colonial period. In my paper I will try to present and analyze the main trends during a hundred years of historical writing on the Italo-Ottoman War and colonial Libya. I hope to make clear in what way the shared history of Italy and Libya could be written in the future to finally obtain a comprehensive view, much missed in scholarship, so far.

**Jakob Kraiss** has studied History, Islamic Studies and Philosophy at Freie Universität Berlin and Università La Sapienza, Rome. He taught at the Department of Islamic Studies, FU Berlin. Currently, he is working on a PhD on Libyan historiography during the colonial period at the Berlin Graduate School of Muslim Cultures and Societies, FU Berlin.

---

**Nora Lafi**, Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin, Germany

**How to write a decolonized history of the Libyan South? The Fezzan between Ottoman Empire and European Imperialisms**

The aim of this paper is to discuss the way in which the Ottoman province of Fezzan became, during the last decades of the Ottoman Empire, the object of strong rivalries between European powers. Based upon the study of a set of maps, both Ottoman and colonial, and of archives in Istanbul and Tripoli, the paper will present how the French occupation of neighbouring Algeria in 1830 and in general the European colonial conquest of the Sahara induced a change in the local balance of powers at different scales; from cities to regions. It also shows how frontiers were drawn in the context of negotiations between European powers. The paper will also focus on the Ottoman governance of the Sahara and its adaptation to new threats, and will confront the theme of the writing history today as part of a reflection on the writing of the history of Libya.

**Nora Lafi** is the chair of several research projects at the Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin and has published numerous books, papers, and articles on 19<sup>th</sup>-century history and contemporary politics of the Middle East and North Africa. She also is a member of the Kollegium of EUME.

---

**Mostafa Minawi**, EUME-Fellow 2011/12, Berlin, Germany

**On the Use (and Misuse) of Ottoman Archives for the Writing of Sanussi History into the Narrative of the Nation**

In this paper I will discuss several examples of the use, and more often, misuse of Ottoman records in order to portray the Grand Sanusi as an anti-Ottoman figure in the effort of imbuing this historic figure with Libyan proto-nationalist characterizes. I will focus on a few examples, showing how a close reading of a wide range of records from the Ottoman archives shows a rather symbiotic relationship existed between the central imperial government and the Grand Sanusi. Highlighting this will help to questions the categories of the “local” vs. “Imperial” often used as a starting point in the telling of the national histories of the post-Ottoman nation-states.

**Mostafa Minawi** is a EUME-Fellow at the berlin-based Forum Transregionale Studien for the year 2011/12. He is a specialist in Ottoman history of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with a special emphasis on the Ottoman-African and Ottoman-Hijazi dimension. He defended his PhD dissertation in History and Middle Eastern Studies at New York University in 2011, and will take up an Assistant Professor position at the Department of History at Cornell University in the fall of 2012.

---



**Eileen Ryan**, Columbia University, New York, USA

### **Italy and the Sanusiyya: Negotiating Authority in Colonial Libya**

In the first few years after the occupation of the Libyan coast in 1911, the liberal politicians of the Italian colonial administration were committed to the idea of establishing a system of indirect rule in the eastern region of Cyrenaica under the leadership of Muslim elites in the Sufi order of the Sanusiyya. The idea stemmed from representations of the Sanusiyya in colonial ethnographic literature as a highly centralized and conservative organization that wielded a type of religio-political power in the region that could be used to control the Libyan interior, and their plan spoke to a liberal ideal of humanistic nationalism among Italian political and intellectual elites. This presentation examines the colonial imagination surrounding the Sanusiyya and the process by which Italian, British, and French officials circumvented the militant anticolonialism of the recognized leader of the Sanusiyya, Ahmed al-Sherif, by negotiating a power-sharing system with his more willing cousin, Idris al-Sanusi. The story of Idris al-Sanusi's involvement with the Italian administration as a semi-autonomous intermediary is well known, but has received little attention in recent years as historians have turned to focus on source of anti-colonial resistance among other regional notables, particularly in the western region of Tripolitania. Given the recent revolution against the Qaddafi regime, I argue that we face an ideal moment to return to a discussion of the Sanusiyya during the Italian colonial period to examine the ways in which the colonial state negotiated a position of political authority for Idris al-Sanusi based on a paradigm that dictated a necessary connection between religious and political power in North Africa. The process of negotiations with Sanusi elites occurred on an international level as European and Ottoman diplomats competed over the right to sell themselves as protectors of Islam in North Africa; but it also involved negotiating a regional network of tribal alliances as Idris al-Sanusi attempted to generate consensus for a Sanusi-Italian compendium in the Cyrenaican interior.

**Eileen Ryan** is a doctoral candidate in the history department at Columbia University. She is finishing a dissertation on the relationship between the Italian colonial state and the political authority of the Sufi *tariqa* of the Sanusiyya in eastern Libya, and she is scheduled to defend in June 2012. Starting in the fall, she will begin teaching courses on Europe in the World at Temple University in Philadelphia.

---

**Henning Sievert**, Bonn University, Bonn, Germany

### **Intermediaries and Local Initiative Around 1900**

Historiography of the Ottoman period in Libya, including both Libyan and Turkish national historiographies, often follows a trajectory leading to the wars of 1911-18, which saw Ottoman and Central Power support for anticolonial resistance. The preceding period of direct rule after 1835, however, allegedly left Libya ill-prepared to resist Italian colonialism because of Ottoman internal weakness. Ottoman rule itself is often portrayed as superficial in the sense that it penetrated only certain coastal regions, but had to rely on the cooperation of local chiefs in the Tripolitanian and Saharan hinterland and of the Sanusiyya in the east. To better understand how politics in Ottoman North Africa actually worked before 1911, I focus on the intersection of the imperial and local levels, and more specifically on the agency, language and strategies of local spokesmen and Ottoman officials around 1900. Instead of constructing a dichotomic picture of locals vs. foreign rulers, I intend to envisage local community leaders, low-level officials and individuals with political ties throughout the region, to other parts of the empire and the capital, tentatively, as "nodes" in a much larger network of communication. In this way, I hope to contribute to a more comprehensive picture that includes the people "in

between“ as well as local initiative. Historical sources lend themselves most readily to an analysis of such strategies and modes of communication when they fail; therefore, the observations I would like to share with you are mainly based on documentation of inspections and disciplinary trials of officials. Of course, judicial questions are immaterial in this context, but I would like to contribute to a nuanced interpretation of local Ottoman politics that overcomes local/national and other schematic divisions.

**Henning Sievert** is a specialist in Mamluk and Ottoman history. His current research project is on local and translocal politics in late Ottoman and early Italian Libya. He is an associated researcher in the Middle Eastern studies department of Zurich University and a lecturer at the Institute for Oriental and Asian Studies at Bonn University.

---

**Ebubekir Subaşı**, BOA, Istanbul, Turkey

### **The Importance of the Archives in the Telling of the History of Libya and Some Problems with the Archival Material**

On 25 April 1963, the federal system of government was abolished and in line with this the name of the country was changed to the Kingdom of Libya to reflect the constitutional changes. The monarchy came to an end on 1 September 1969 when a group of military officers led by Muammar Gaddafi staged a coup d'état against King Idris while he was in Turkey for medical treatment. The revolutionaries arrested the army chief of staff and the head of security in the kingdom. Following the overthrow of the monarchy the country was renamed the Libyan Arab Republic.

By this time, Libya was destroyed. The Italians could not use the Ottoman archives, after they left, archival records were further damaged. However, the archives have a great place on human life and archive the common property of mankind. Ottomans left in Libya a good archive, though accessible archival material in Libya remains small. This is the most abundant material for the history of Libya. But now it is not yet possible to take advantage of this archive because of some problems.

Some of the problematic issues that I will touch on are in my paper: central archives on the level of the world; security classification, access, accumulation, the use of acid free paper; acquisition, ADP records management, agency records centre; archival heritage, archival integrity, archival jurisdiction, archival legislation; teaching unit, cataloging; sufficient computer, computer program, custody of records; technical requirements of the buildings housing the archives, framing, legal protection of archives; and finally, principle of respect for archival structure, provenance, restoration and restoration laboratory.

**Ebubekir Subaşı** is a writer and expert on the Ottoman archives, with a special emphasis on the archival records of Ottoman North Africa.

---

**Salaheddin H. Sury, CNARHS, Tripoli, Libya**

### **Libya: Sixty Years Later**

As may be recalled, in 1951-1952, Libya under the auspices of the UN worked out a constitution, formed a government, and declared itself an independent state. Since then it had to make its way through to face various complicated problems, politically, economically, and socially. Sixty years later, in 2011-2012, after a peaceful revolution which became a bloody civil war, Libya found itself once more back starting from zero, trying to work out a constitution, to form a new government, and to build on a solid base and a lasting civil and democratic state. Why such a disastrous set back had to happen? A big question, of course, and the answer could be traced along the preceding sixty years, which my paper will address.

During the monarchical period 1952-1969, Libya was supposed to be a liberal democratic state ruled by a constitutional monarch and by an elected government. In fact that was not the case, the king always had had the final word, directly or indirectly, over all the other political organs. Political parties were dissolved from the very beginning and opposition was practically annulled.

Freedom of thoughts, of press, and of printing were only words in the constitution, they had no existence in reality. The government tampered with all five elections for the parliament that it held during the period under discussion. The system's prestige was further damaged by corruption as admitted by the king himself who promised to intervene personally to put an end to that, but nothing was done and his threats remained empty words.

Regionally, the system remained under strong attacks from Nasser of Egypt for having foreign military bases, and was accused of being an agent of western intrigues.

The agitation reached its peak particularly in the last years of the regime and all were looking forward to see its imminent downfall.

The army exploited the growing agitation and executed a coup d'état by which Libya was declared a republic to be on the path of freedom, socialism and unity. The revolutionary command council headed by Ghaddafi promised a new era of justice, equality and economic prosperity for all the Libyans. He was welcomed in the start by the majority who believed his promises and considered him as the better alternative.

He worked very hard through forty years to consolidate his power, created a reign of terror and emerged in the end as the godfather. He liquidated the army in favor of strong and well-trained militias under his own command. He also built an up-to-date modern security system and declared an open war against his opponents both in Libya and abroad. Eventually, he concentrated power in his own hands and nothing would be done without his own approval. Torture, killing, assassination, imprisonment and any similar other means were the only response to any peaceful demonstration, innocent expression or any divergent view.

The events of February 17<sup>th</sup> 2011, and later are still fresh in the memories. Ghaddafi is gone now and Libya is starting from zero trying, with the help of the UNO and the modern nations, to build its own democratic institutions.

The challenge Libya is facing now is how to come out eventually with an articulated system that will make the repetition of such a dramatic episode impossible.

**Salaheddin H. Sury** is a retired professor of history who has taught at several universities in Tripoli and Benghazi. He is currently a senior counselor at the CNARHS (Centre for National Archives and Historical Studies), and is in charge of its research projects.

---

**Knut S. Vikør**, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

### **Sanusi Studies After the Fall**

The history of the Sanusiya put the Qadhafi ideologists in a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, the third leader of the order, Ahmad al-Sharif, was a great anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist hero in the anti-Italian struggle until 1916. On the other, his cousin and successor Muhammad Idris, the later king, was a tool of imperialism and the embodiment of all that was bad in old Libya. It was possible for the regime to unify these two positions in 20<sup>th</sup>-century history by assuming an enmity between the two, and to “isolate” Idris from the internal war led by Umar al-Mukhtar. But it made it very delicate to study the shared history of the two, which is the 19th-century beginnings of the Sanusi order. Thus, many histories of that century skip very lightly over the Sanusis before the Italian invasion, so as to avoid the paradox.

At the same time, the regime crackdown of the remnants of the order after 1969 has led to an almost complete amnesia in the country about the non-resistance side of the Sufi order, which was in any case transformed both by the Italian repression and its later adoption into the royal structures. It is therefore not clear how much material or memories can now be found about the early history of the Sanusiya. However, it will be a task for future historians to again see this religious order as more than just a vehicle for political and “nationalist” struggle, but also as a religious and intellectual force in Cyrenaica, the Fezzan as well as in neighbouring and more remote Muslim countries.

My presentation will thus be a brief overview over the state of knowledge of the early (19th-century) history of the Sanusiya, and some reflections for future research.

**Knut S. Vikør** is a professor of the history of the Middle East and Muslim Africa at the University of Bergen. His book *Sufi and Scholar on the Desert Edge* on the founder of the Sanusiya order, Muhammad b. Ali al-Sanusi (d. 1859), is a seminal work on the Sanusiya. He has also published extensively on related topics of Sufism and Islamic law.

---

**Europe in the Middle East – the Middle East in Europe (EUME)\***

The research program **Europe in the Middle East – the Middle East in Europe (EUME)** seeks to rethink key concepts and premises that link and divide Europe and the Middle East. It focuses on the diverse processes of transfer, exchange and interaction between Europe and the Middle East. EUME is hosted and supported by the Forum Transregionale Studien.

**Forum Transregionale Studien\*\***

The **Forum Transregionale Studien** is a Berlin-based research platform designed to promote research that connects systematic and region-specific questions in a perspective that addresses entanglements and interactions beyond national, cultural or regional frames. The Forum works in tandem with already existing institutions and networks engaged in transregional studies and is supported by an association of directors of universities, research institutes and networks mainly based in Berlin. It is funded by the Senate of Berlin.

\*For more information on EUME please see: [www.eume-berlin.de](http://www.eume-berlin.de).

\*\*For more information on the Forum please see [www.forum-transregionale-studien.de](http://www.forum-transregionale-studien.de)

**Contact:** [eume@trafo-berlin.de](mailto:eume@trafo-berlin.de)

Europe in the Middle East – The Middle East in Europe  
Forum Transregionale Studien  
c/o Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin  
Wallotstrasse 19, 14193 Berlin  
Telefon: +49 (0)30 89001-259  
Telefax: +49 (0)30 89001-200