



Call for papers RELIGIOUS DYNAMICS IN CONTEMPORARY EGYPT

International conference to be held in Cairo
WARNING: CHANGE IN THE DATES 10, 11 & 12 September 2017

The rapid and profound dynamics of change that Egypt has experienced since the Nasserite era require a reconsideration of our approach to the evolution of religious phenomena. These phenomena sit at the heart of Egyptians' daily lives and must be constantly re-evaluated by researchers as new patterns and even hybrid forms are confronted. The work conducted to date tends to take into account the sometimes paradoxical dimensions of the socio-religious developments that contemporary Egypt has witnessed, with, on the one hand, a continued maintenance of interreligious relations and, on the other, a more and more marked segregation associated with the reaffirmation of confessional, even inter-confessional borders. By applying a resolutely multidisciplinary approach, we intend to look at the full complexity of the role and impact of the religious in the life of Egyptians, whether in its political dimension or in its social and cultural organisation.

The first line of study will consist in examining interactions between, on the one hand, the two great monotheistic religions represented in Egypt and, on the other, between the quotidian – daily lived experience – and the dogmatic precepts that are defended by this or that institution. The point here is to put in perspective religious facts and daily issues. Religion as lived and experienced will be examined within its relationships to music, law, leisure, politics and business, as well as across the spaces of religious action (town/country, district, places of worship, and the physical, symbolic and acoustic signposts) that are useful in the analysis of these interactions.

After the notion of contacts comes that of divisions and of the resultant inter-religious competition. This will be considered within the second line of study. This competition is often manifested between the two great monotheistic religions, Islam and Christianity, but it can spring from the success of sizeable movements (charismatics, pentecostalists, salafists etc.) within each confession, provoking quarrels around religion, dogma and identity. Once again, this issue of competition will be examined through the daily lives of the individuals in Cairo as in the rest of the country. How do confessional borders and rivalries arise, feeding the ground for sometimes isolationist community development, and to what extent does this influence the daily life of Egyptians? These rivalries will be approached in a firmly empirical fashion, notably through an examination of religious representations as manifested in the press, literature, cinema, music and the visual arts.

A third line of study will be devoted to religious circulation. This dynamic finds its place as much in the circulation of ideas as of individuals who, in the course of their wanderings, carry with them practices, models, and a notion of “elsewhere”. It is also worth examining this idea of circulation in relation to the local environment, to which it must constantly adapt, or else on which it acts to reshape. Within this line of study, we would

encourage, aside from interventions concerning Egypt, propositions involving comparative studies with other contexts, and also examinations of religious practices in the Egyptian diaspora and their influence on the home country.

Lastly, we remain mindful of the new dynamics that have emerged from the revolution of 25 January 2011. This was both the result of a decade marked by important social and political changes and also the trigger for new trends whose scale is still difficult to evaluate. At the political level, the religious question is often to be found at the heart of debates that have divided Egyptian society after the revolution. Among the numerous points that mark the post-revolutionary religious scene, one notes, for example, that salafism benefitted from the brief liberalisation of the political arena to demonstrate its sound foothold and its capacity to mobilise, whereas the Copts witnessed the emergence of new social movements that notably contested the monopoly of the patriarch as representative of the “community”. After taking power, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi promised a “renewal of religious discussion”. This appears to have struck a chord within society, the press, cultural production and in daily conversation, particularly amongst the educated youth, which is keen to emancipate itself vis-à-vis the various authorities that enclose social life in an often-stifling straitjacket.

Proposal for papers (**350 words maximum**) with a short **biographical note on the author** (three lines) should be sent before **30 November 2016** to the following address: drec.colloque@gmail.com. Presentations can be in French, English or Arabic.

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