



## Call for participation

### “Typologies of Western Islam in European Encyclopedias, Dictionaries and Lexicons in the 18th and 19th Centuries”

International Conference  
March 16-17, 2023 in Nancy

This international conference on the "Typologies of Western Islam in European Encyclopaedias, Dictionaries and Lexicons in the 18th and 19th Centuries", is a continuation of the conference on "Islamic Resonances in the West", organized at the University of La Réunion by Bénédicte Letellier and Guilhem Armand in March 2022.

The conference will revisit the encyclopaedias, dictionaries and lexicons produced in Europe throughout the 18th and 19th centuries in order to question the foundational and synergistic links between language and thought that create cultural identities. Since the 1970s, it has become clear that this corpus is not only reference works intended to synthesize classify and build up knowledge by dealing with the information and realities of the world (DUBOIS: 1971). But their educational intent is also manifested in their propensity to orient a gaze and to define a common vision of identities (COLOMBANI: 1997). Thus, this conference will explore the conceptual and methodological modalities adopted in these scholarly books to describe Islam according to types determined by the choice of certain criteria and symbols. A set of representations, mental perceptions, most often unconscious and collective, govern the definitions and entries. The information that abounds there constitutes a discourse in its own right, with its own specificities and strategies (GLATIGNY: 2003). Islam was perceived as a geopolitical space (Ottoman Empire), but also as a cultural and religious space (Muslim world). They thus retain the traces of a collective imagination that has produced these interwoven representations.

This reflection on the typologies of Western Islam will feature different points of view:

1. **The authors:** What is the social situation of the authors? What are their ideological and political affiliations, their methodologies, their sources, their expertise in Eastern languages? The aim here is to take a contextual and historical approach to clarify certain concerns or

obsessions about the foreignness of Islam that have subsequently become enthusiastic clichés.

2. **Articles/entries:** text style, format, genre, borrowings, references. The study of these texts may be literary (narration, description, characters, caricatures, chronicles, etc.) or lexicographical (principles of classification of entries, transcription, lexicological equivalences, invention of concepts, etc.). To what extent does the style of these articles express a way of being and thinking, more typical of oneself than of the other? Particular attention can be paid to the typology of Islam or the Muslim, including the construction of physical, social, anthropological or cultural stereotypes.

3. **Reception:** to whom were these texts addressed (politicians, religious men, lay readers under the influence of the Church, neophyte public)? How were they received? What are the socio-psychological factors that have conveyed some understanding? Was there a work of rewriting, appropriation, alteration? These typologies were born in a cultural history of ideas governed by the political and military contexts that shook Europe at the time (the search for markets in the East, rivalry with the British).

4. **Science:** Which areas of classical Muslim culture have paid more attention to these authors? Which areas have been ignored or neglected? What are the recurring objects of study in these corpora that have prevented us from seeing other dimensions of Islam? How can we explain the focus on the theme of violence in the Koran? on the life of the prophet, the *sira*? or on certain particularities of Islamic law? What are the reasons for such interest? Are the underlying typologies of these dictionaries and encyclopaedias part of the history of science, respecting the evolution of the principles governing knowledge, its organisation, conception and dissemination? What is the role of these corpora in the construction of Western knowledge about Islam?

5. **Literature:** What is the role of fiction in relation to these reference works? What legitimacy does it give to these so-called 'learned' representations? How has it validated these typologies while creating a cultural and political identity norm in relation to them? How have these typologies of Muslim otherness shaped the models and fictions necessary for self-construction?

6. **Contemporary interpretation:** Can we judge the errors, exaggerations, prejudices, amplifications, limitations, manipulations, silences of these corpora? Should they be studied as a response to historical elements inherent to Europe at the time? How have these typologies determined stereotypes that are still present in contemporary relations between the West and the Muslim world? What is the strength of these typologies that, four centuries later and despite numerous scientific studies, prevent a real dialogue?

#### **Methodological indications:**

**Corpus:** Particular attention will be paid to proposals that examine dictionaries, encyclopedias and lexicons published in Europe that have dealt with themes relating to Islam and Orientalism. Here are a few indicative examples: the *Dictionary* of P. Bayle (1696), the *Encyclopedia or Dictionary reasoned of sciences, arts and trades* (1751-1772) under the direction of D. Diderot and, partially, of J Le Rond d'Alembert, the *Littré Dictionary* (1873-1877), the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, *Dictionary of the French Academy*, the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *An universal, historical, geographical, chronological and poetical dictionary* (1703), the *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste* published by Johann Heinrich Zedler (1731-1754), the *Nuovo dizionario scientifico e curioso, sacroprofano* published by Gianfrancesco Pivati (1746-1751), etc.

**Historical framework:** It is desirable to focus on the 18th and 19th centuries, marked by the emergence of colonialism, Enlightenment philosophy, exoticism and Orientalism. Proposals that study the constants of these bodies of work in the 20th and 21st centuries, which are marked by new issues such as independence, the birth of Arab states and the decline of Orientalism following the emergence of the humanities and of Islamology, will also be welcome.

**Exposure:**

An exhibition of old books will be organized at the Library of Letters which will illustrate the rise of Orientalism through the works of European lexicologists, philologists and thinkers of the 18th and 19th centuries.

**How to apply:**

To apply to the conference, please submit a 500-word abstract and 1-page CV to  
nejmeddine.khalfallah@univ-lorraine.fr  
benedicte.letellier@univ-reunion.fr

**Calendar:**

Proposals submission: October 15, 2022  
Notification to authors: October 31, 2022  
Conference date: March 16-17, 2023  
Article submission: April 15, 2023

**Registration fees:**

30 euros to be paid on site. Lunches and coffee breaks will be offered by the University of Lorraine. Transport and accommodation remain the responsibility of the participants.

**Steering committee:**

Nejmeddine KHALFALLAH (Université de Lorraine, France)  
Bénédicte LETELLIER (Université de la Réunion, France)  
Fouad MLIH (Université de Lorraine, France)

**Scientific committee:**

Bénédicte LETELLIER (Université de la Réunion, France)  
Fadi JABER (Université de Lorraine)  
Fouad MLIH (Université de Lorraine)  
Laurence DENOZ (Université de Lorraine, France)  
Nejmeddine KHALFALLAH (Université de Lorraine, France)  
Rima LABBAN, (Université de Montpellier)  
Pascale PELLERIN (CNRS. IHRIM)  
Guilhem ARMAND (Université de la Réunion, France)  
Ziad ELMARSAFY (King's College, Angleterre)

**Bibliographic references:**

- ARKOUN Mohammed, *Histoire de l'islam et des musulmans en France : Du Moyen Âge à nos jours*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2006.
- BISCONTI Valentina, *Le sens en partage : Dictionnaires et théories du sens. XIXe–XXe siècles*, Paris, ENS Éditions, 2018.
- CARDINI Franco, *Europe et islam : Histoire d'un malentendu*, Paris, Le Seuil, 2002.
- DAKHLIA Jocelyne, BERNARD Vincent, *Les musulmans dans l'histoire de l'Europe : Une intégration invisible*, tome 1, Paris, Albin Michel, 2011.
- DANIEL Norman, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image*, Edinburgh, EUP, 1960.
- DUBOIS Jean et Claude, *Introduction à la lexicographie : le dictionnaire*, Paris, Larousse, 1971.
- DJAÏT Hichem, *L'Europe et l'islam*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1978.
- ELMARSIFY Ziad, *The Enlightenment Qur'an: The Politics of Translation and the Construction of Islam*, Oxford, Oneworld Publications, 2009.
- FOUCAULT Michel, *Les mots et les choses*, Paris, Gallimard, 1966.
- GIAUFRET COLOMBANI Hélène, « Les ethnotypes dans quelques dictionnaires français du XVIIème siècle », *ELA*, n. 107, 1997.
- GLATIGNY Michel, « L'article arabe dans un certain nombre de dictionnaires français de Nicot au Grand Robert », *Cahiers de Lexicologie*, n. 83, 2003.
- GROULT Martine, Les Encyclopédies : Construction et circulation du savoir de l'Antiquité à Wikipédia, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2011.
- ALILOUCHE Hayat, *Représentations de l'islam dans les dictionnaires et les encyclopédies du 18<sup>e</sup> siècle au 20<sup>e</sup> siècle*, thèse dirigée par François Gaudin, Normandie Université, 2021.
- HOURLANI Albert, *Islam in European Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- IRWIN Robert, *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and their Enemies*, London, Allen Lane, 2006.
- LAURENS Henry, *Aux sources de l'orientalisme, la « Bibliothèque orientale » de Barthélémi d'Herbelot*, Paris, Maisonneuve et Larose, 1978.
- LAURENS Henry, TOLAN John, VEINSTEIN Gilles, *L'Europe et l'Islam : quinze siècles d'histoire*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2009.
- REIG Daniel, *Homo orientaliste, La langue arabe en France depuis le XIXe siècle*, Paris, Maisonneuve & Larose, 1995.
- REY Alain, *Dictionnaire amoureux des dictionnaires*, Paris, Plon, 2011.
- TOLAN John, *Mahomet l'Européen : Histoire des représentations du Prophète en Occident*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2018.
- VALENSI Lucette, *Ces étrangers familiers : musulmans en Europe (XVIe – XVIIIe siècle)*, Paris, Histoire Payot, 2012.