

CALL FOR PAPERS

INSTITUT FRANCAIS DU PROCHE-ORIENT (IFPO), BEIRUT

LABORATOIRE ESICMED, MANOUBA UNIVERSITY

IN COLLABORATION WITH

L'INSTITUT DE RECHERCHE SUR LE MAGHREB CONTEMPORAIN (IRMC), TUNIS

Path of Men. Portrait of a Literature

Life stories in Arab Writing before the 10th Century AD.

International Conference

Hammamet

4-6 October 2017

The objective of this conference is to examine, from a literary perspective, the biographical story in classical Arabic sources. The conference is part of the GenèR programme at Ifpo “Genesis and Evolution of the Arabic Literary Narrative: New Perspectives” and of the recently concluded ESCIMED seminar “Biography and Autobiography: Rethinking Short Time in the Islamic world”.

The ideas that underpin this conference are in line with the first stage of the GenèR programme. The latter aimed to define the classification of literature in medieval Arabic texts and explore historiographical and religious sources from a literary perspective. It thus focused on defining a new body of work in parallel to the *adab*, and explored the tools to highlight its literary potential. Its overarching goal was to challenge the strict disciplinarian borders that separate studies of Arabic literature and studies of Islam and historiography.

After allowing us to exploit these diverse and varied narrative sources as an integral part of classical Arabic literature, the next stages of the programme will now aim to formulate literary themes based on a decompartmentalised body of work. By maintaining an interdisciplinary approach, these new themes would no longer be limited to revealing the literary identity of the sources studied. Rather, texts are now free to be analysed from a narratological perspective or through the history of the literature and other literary sources.

From this perspective, the life story proves to be a promising theme. It was a significant component of *sīra wa mağāzī* (the life and military expeditions of the Prophet Muhammad), one of the first genres of the Arabic literary corpus. Omnipresent through medieval Arabic literature, biographical and hagiographical elements constitute a solid bridge between the different features of the target body of literature. Indeed, common structuring features can be observed across genres such as in the writings of the *adab* (life of poets, notables etc.), of the *sīra* (life of the Prophet Muhammad), of *qaṣaṣ*

(life of the prophets) and of *ṭabaqāt* and *tarāğim al- ṣaḥāba wa al-tābiʿīn* (life of Companions and Successors).

This call for papers seeks submissions on a character, author, work, theme or literary motif based on work originating before the 10th century AD/ 4th AH. Later historical sources may be used, however only in such a way that they clarify the evolution of certain themes or processes arising from the sources listed in the chronological framework of the conference.

The conference is not primarily concerned with the historicity of the characters, nor the sharing of reality and myth reported in the sources. Rather, it will focus on describing and analysing the materials from which the historiographer, biographer or traditionalist has compiled his narrative and the way in which it has been structured. In this way, contributions should reveal characters and narratives, describe literary motifs and establish a typology.

Papers should look beyond the intellectual, political or ideological position of the classical author. Contributors from studies of Islam, literature or history, using their respective disciplinary tools, are invited to attempt to analyse how the author has shaped the text in an effort to create a literary object.

In addition, the paper should rethink the way in which classical authors imagined the paths of men, by conceptualising them and making use of retrospective and prospective logic. In doing so, the representation of the lives of individuals can be examined within societies that accorded the greatest importance to collective identity.

Contributors can present their work at the conference in French, Arabic or English.

Proposals must be submitted in two languages (Arabic and French, Arabic and English or French and English). They must not exceed 4000 characters, including spaces. An additional selective bibliography must not exceed a single page. Proposals should be sent to the following address: recitdevie@ifporient.org. (See deadlines in the calendar).

Living Expenses

Participants' expenses will be fully covered during the period of the conference.

Transportation

Securing transportation to Tunis is the responsibility of the speakers. However, some participants whose organisations or agencies are not able to finance transport to Tunis may submit a request to the conference organisers to fund their air-travel, subject to availability.

Calendar

Friday 19 May 2017	Deadline for submission of proposals
Friday 30 June 2017	Announcement of proposals accepted by the Scientific Committee
Friday 8 September 2017	Deadline for submission of final papers
Wednesday 4- Friday 6 October 2017	Conference

Organisers

Iyas Hassan (Ifpo) & Brahim Jadla (ESICMED)

Scientific Committee

Monica Balda-Tillier, Associate Professor, University of Grenoble Alpes

Abdellatif Hannachi, Professor, University of Manouba

Iyas Hassan, Researcher, Institut-Français du Proche-Orient

Frédéric Imbert, Researcher - Scientific Director, Institut-Français du Proche-Orient

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Frédéric Lagrange, Professor, University Paris-Sorbonne

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Elisabeth Vauthier, Professor, University of Lyon 3.