



The Quest for the Orient

January 13-14, 2009

PROGRAM

TUESDAY 13 January

09.00: Welcome to the speakers

09.30: Opening speeches by:

- Mr. Didier GAZAGNADOU, Counselor for Cooperation and Cultural Activity at the French Embassy , Abu Dhabi
- Mr. Zaki NUSSEIBEH, Member of the Management Council, Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi
- Mr. Xavier GALMICHE, Academic Director, Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi
- Mr. Mohamed AL-ABOODI, Deputy Academic Director, Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi
- Mr. Bernard FRANCO, Director of Modern Literature Studies, Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi

10.30: Break

11.00: SESSION 1

MUTUAL KNOWLEDGE

President: Mr. Pierre Brunel

The Arab Mathematics, a bridge between two worlds

Mr. Jean-Louis BOURSIN, Professor emeritus, Paris Institute of Political Studies

Persia in Western Literature

Mr. Robert IRWIN, Senior Research Associate at the Oriental and African Studies, London University

How the Parisians are seen by three Arab travelers in the 19th Century
Mr. Frédéric LAGRANGE, Associate Professor, Paris-Sorbonne University

12.15 – 12.30 : Discussion
12.30 – 13.30 : Lunch

13.45: SESSION 2

**KNOWING THE ORIENT, FROM THE MIDDLE AGE TILL
THE AGE OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT**

President: Mr. Didier Alexandre

The World of the Indian Ocean: Encyclopedias to Marco Polo
Mr. Dominique BOUTET, Professor, Paris-Sorbonne University

The Oriental Library of d’Herbelot: a good use of the Orient
Mrs. Dominique TORABI, Director of the French Alliance in Al-Ain,
Professor at Al-Ain University

Visions of the Orient between Paradise and Hell
Mrs. Carolin FISCHER, Professor, University of Hamburg

14.45 – 15.00 : Discussion
15.00 – 15.15 : Break

15h15: SESSION 3

ORIENTS OF THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

President: Mrs. Dominique Millet

The Romantic Orient or the Origin of Knowledge
Mr. Bernard FRANCO, Professor, Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi

Lamartine and the Orient
Mr. Pierre BRUNEL, Professor emeritus, Paris-Sorbonne University; Mediator
of the university

15.55 – 16.05 : Discussion
19.30 : Opera Concert
(Cultural Center – same building as the National Theater)

WEDNESDAY 14 January

09.30: SESSION 4

ELEMENTS OF AN ARCHEOLOGY

President: Mr. Frédéric Lagrange

The Greeks and the Orient before Alexander the Great

Mr. Jean-Jacques MAFFRE, Professor, Paris-Sorbonne University

The Romans and the Orient

Mr. Alexandre GRANDAZZI, Professor, Paris-Sorbonne University

The re-discovery of the Orient in the 19th Century

Mr. Jean-Yves MONCHAMBERT, Professor, Paris-Sorbonne University

10.30 – 10.45 : Discussion

10.45 – 11.00 : Break

11.00: SESSION 5

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ORIENT DURING THE 19TH CENTURY

President: Mr. Jean-Yves Masson

The occidental-oriental Divan: Goethe reads Hafiz

Mrs. Juliette VION-DURY, Professor, the University of Limoges

Nerval and the quest for Arcadia: A travel through the Orient till Aurelia

Mr. Michel BRIX, Teacher of researches, Namur University

11.40 – 11.50: Discussion

12.00 – 13.15: Lunch

13.15: SESSION 6

REDISCOVERY OF THE ORIENT

President: Mr. Bertrand Westphal

The Orient of Yeats

Mr. Jean-Yves MASSON, Professor, Paris-Sorbonne University

Massignon and the Orient

Mrs. Dominique MILLET, Professor, Paris-Sorbonne University

Literature in the proof of Aden, Paul Nizan and Frederic Prokosh

Mr. Didier ALEXANDRE, Professor, Paris-Sorbonne University

14.15 – 14.30: Discussion

14.30 – 14.45 : Break

14.45: SESSION 6

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ORIENT DURING THE 20TH CENTURY

President: Mrs. Carolin Fischer

Borges and the Arabian Nights

Mr. Philip KENNEDY, Associate Professor, Faculty Director, New York University Abu Dhabi

Rooms with view on the Orient

Mr. Bertrand WESTPHAL, Professor, the University of Limoges

15.25 – 15.35: Discussion

Does the Orient really exist?

Mr. Didier GAZAGNADOU, Professor at the University of Paris VIII Vincennes Saint-Denis, Counselor for Cooperation and Cultural Activity at the French Embassy, Abu Dhabi.

15.35: Closing of the conference by Mr. Pierre Brunel, Emeritus Professor at Paris-Sorbonne University and Mediator of the university.



Connaissance de l'Orient

13-14 janvier 2009

SCIENTIFIC AND ORGANIZING COMMITTEES

A- SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Co-presided by Pierre BRUNEL, professor emeritus at Paris-Sorbonne University, Mediator of the university

&

Bernard FRANCO, professor at Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, Director of French and Comparative Literature Department

The scientific committee is composed of :

- Didier ALEXANDRE, professor at Paris-Sorbonne University, Director of the UFR of French and Comparative Literature
- Michael BERNSEN, professor at Bonn University,
- Carolin FISCHER, professor at the University of Hambourg,
- Didier GAZAGNADOU, professor at Paris VIII University, Counselor to Cultural Affairs at the French Embassy in Abu Dhabi
- Philip KENNEDY, associated professor at New York University, Director of New York Institute in Abu Dhabi

B- ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

- Cultural & Student Life Department, Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi
- Communication Department, Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi



BIOGRAPHIES AND SUMMARY OF THE LECTURES

Jean-Louis BOURSIN

Emeritus professor at the Institute of Political Studies in Paris

Is the Arab mathematics a bridge between two worlds?

The history of mathematics presents only two essays for gathering all the knowledge: The one of Euclid and, in the middle of the 20th Century, the collective project under the pseudo name Burbaki. The latter has never talked about Arab mathematics. However, some historians see in it the only place for transferring knowledge issued from antiquity. The present paper proposes to study this missing link.

Robert IRWIN

Robert Irwin is a Senior Research Associate at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University.

Formerly a lecturer in Medieval History at the University of St Andrews he is the author of six novels, as well as non-fiction studies on Mamluk history, the Arabian Nights, Islamic art, the Alhambra, classical Arabic literature and the history of Orientalism.

“Persia in Western Literature”

Whereas Western engagement with Arab culture from the seventeenth century onwards was primarily academic and often had a religious motivation, engagement with Persia was more literary. Montesquieu, William Jones, Goethe, Pétis de la Croix, Gobineau, Arnold, Morier and Loti at least deserve mention, but special attention will be paid to key translations by Julius Mohl of the Shahnama and by Edward Fitzgerald of Umar Khayyam's Rubaiyat. Also, contrary to Edward Said, Morier's Orientalism was not 'merely a stylistic matter'.

Frederic LAGRANGE

Frédéric Lagrange is an associate professor of Arabic language and literature at the University of Paris-Sorbonne. His recent research focused on expression of social

transformations, especially conceptions of gender in dialectal poetry, song and literature. His last book: *Islam d'interdits, Islam de jouissances*, Paris, Téraèdre, 2008.

“How the Parisians are seen by three Arab travelers in the 19th century”

In the 19th century the Orient and the Occident were discursively established just like mirror effect. The understandings of gender became a fundamental element of alterity in the conscience of the Self compared with Other.

When the European colonization started strongly to influence the Arab-Muslim world by imposing discursive practices of Othering leading these countries to question their proper supremacy, the homosocial foundation of the society starts shacking up and mixity started modestly to dominate in the next century.

The review of gender relations nurtured possibilities between men and women to meet in the land of Islam as well as through journeys in Europe.

While Flaubert and Nerval dreamed of *almees* (belly dancers) and odalisques and "reveal" to their readers the so-called harem secrets, illustrating the status of the Arab woman as an essential element of alterity and introducing its symbolic image, certain Arab travelers discovered the Parisian women through the annotations on the French expedition to Egypt.

Distractive and attractive, distinguished and dominant, the Parisian woman intrigues. The notes given by the Arab who traveling in Europe such as Rifâ'al-Tahtaw, Egyptian (1826-1930), Faris al-Shidyâq, Lebanese (1855) and Idris al-'Amrâwî , Moroccan (1860) highlighted some of the issues that the Arab-Muslim mind had to deal with when facing, for the first time, the Western modernity.

Dominique BOUTET

Born in 1949, Dominique Boutet is Professor of the Middle Eastern French Literature at Paris-Sorbonne University. Alumnus of *l'Ecole normale supérieure*, he is holder of a PHD in French Literature.

He published around ten books and text editions such as the text edition of the 6th volume of the “*Deviselement de Marco Polo*” directed by Philipp Menard.

“The world of the Indian ocean: encyclopedias for Marco Polo”

The Indian Ocean, as defined by Jacques Le Goff, was for the medieval men a “Horizon of dreams”. This paper highlights the transition of a bookish knowledge inherited from the ancients and transmitted through the encyclopedias and its imaginaries, to the discovery of the Orient by travelers such as Marco Polo who recorded their experience focusing in particular on the anthropological evidence.

Dominique CARNOY-TORABI

Holder of PHD in French Literature from the "*Université de Lille III*", before joining the UAE University in Al Ain as Associate Professor, Dominique Carnoy-Torabi was teaching at Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran> She has many works on the European Orientalism in the 17th Century.

“Barthelemy d'Herbelot: a good use of the Orient”

Barthelemy d'Herbelot de Molainville (1625-1695) is the author of *“Bibliothèque orientale, ou dictionnaire universel”*. This great work is an encyclopedic dictionary containing all the knowledge on the Orient throughout the Classic era. The Orient of the three Muslims Empires: the Ottoman, the Persian and the Mughal-Indian.

The approximately 8000 references of the book unfold a picture of the East which will influence the next two centuries: reservoir of wisdom, heroism and glory, but also tragic and excess. The paradox is that Herbelot, by fighting stereotypes of his time, helped to create other, no less meaningful.

Carolyn FISCHER

Successor to the Chair of French and Italian Literature at the University of Hamburg since 2006, she has a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Universite Libre de Berlin (*Education erotique, Pietro Aretinos Ragonamenti im libertinen Roman Frankreich*. Stuttgart 1994.) She has an accreditation in Roman Philology at the University of Potsdam (*Der poetische Pakt. Rolle und Funktion des Ich in poetischen bei der Liebeslyrik Ovid, Petrarch, Ronsard, Shakespeare and Baudelaire*. Heidelberg 2007).

“Visions of East between heaven and hell”

The paper highlights certain points related to the concept of Orient in France in the eighteenth century, especially in literature. By disregarding these fancy thoughts which are often dominating, it will be possible to identify three main aspects:

- attribute its proper misconcepts to a distant and/or unknown people
- consider such people as a prototype
- See its own country through the eyes of a foreigner.

The evolution of the perception reached by the Eastern countries has contributed to replace the phantasmagoric image of the Orient by the concept of exploration and knowledge which put an end to the idealistic trend.

Bernard FRANCO

Professor of comparative literature, Bernard Franco is the Director of the French Comparative Literature Department at Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi. His research focuses on European literature of the Enlightenment to Romanticism, including questions of drama and the relationship between literature and aesthetics

“The romantic Orient or the origin of knowledge”

If the imaginary Orient which relates to the idea of birth or origin really exists, the Romantic era deepened this concept with a fresh look onto the Oriental world. The quest for the Orient grows and flourishes an image in which the literary East embodies the source of all knowledge

Pierre BRUNEL

Emeritus Professor and current mediator of Paris-Sorbonne University, Pierre Brunel is a specialist in comparative Literature and has published many books for Paul Claudel, Arthur Rimbaud, Paul Verlaine, the literatures of the 19th and 20th Centuries, as well as the literary myths.

“Lamartine and the Orient”

The four articles Lamartine wrote in 1840 on “*la Question d’Orient*” express the author’s old desire. Since 1818 he dreamed to go to the East. In 1932 he started his journey and lost his daughter in Beirut.

In Jerusalem, he began his poem “*Le Désert, ou l’immortalité de Dieu*” which highlights the importance of the literary journey. His novel “*Voyage en Orient*” was published in 1835 but Lamartine had to wait till 1850 to return. The book “*Nouveau Voyage en Orient*” is published from 1851 to 1853.

Jean-Jacques MAFFRE

Jean-Jacques Maffre is a Professor of Greek Literature and Civilization at Paris Sorbonne University. Student of the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*, he was member of the French Archaeological School of Athens (1968-1972). PHD in Literature (1983) teacher and then professor at the *Institut d’Etudes grecques at Paris Sorbonne University*, he is since 1982 professor of Greek Iconography at the *Ecole du Louvre*.

“The Greeks and the Orient before Alexander the Great”

Long before the famous conquests made by Alexander the Great to the Middle East during the 3rd quarter of the fourth century BC. took place, the Greeks had important relations with the Middle East, especially with eastern Anatolia, the Phoenician, Syria, Mesopotamia and Egypt.

As proven and documented by the Bronze Age archaeological discoveries, in the second millennium B.C, relations between the Aegean world (Proto-Greeks, then the Greeks themselves, who lived around the Aegean Sea) and the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean region flourished and developed considerably in the 1st half of the First Millennium B.C: the Greeks, who were trading with the Levant, set their sails towards the Eastern Mediterranean shores, acquiring though a lot of knowledge from the Near Eastern civilization specially in the cultural field, such as writing, artistic forms, decorative and mythological themes. This influence characterized the Archaic Greek Arts which was often labeled as orientalized (from the late eighth to early sixth century B.C).

From the second half of the 6th century, the conflicts between the Greeks and the Persians initiated. The stormy relationship between the Great King and the Greek cities started in the 5th and 4th centuries B.C marking the Hellenic history. The repulsion and fascination resented towards the Eastern people, did not affect the appreciation that the Greeks, for many reasons, had toward the Orientals.

This paper will try to analyze the phases of this relationship between both worlds Occident and Orient which by being so distant had at times exchanged relations and mutual influence.

Alexandre GRANDAZZI

Graduated from the *École Normale Supérieure*, Grandazzi Alexander is a former member of the French School in Rome. Professor at the Department of Latin in Paris Sorbonne University and member of its Board of Directors, he is also a member of the Committee of terminology and neology presided by the Prime Minister.

« Rome et l'Orient »

What was the outcome of the roman discovery in the East? To which extend the Roman soldiers and merchants reached to? What were the traces left by the Romans in the East; but also those left by the East in Rome? How this Roman Empire which aimed to its universality could coexist with other territories that were out of its domination? Has any Roman orientalism existed?

The answer to these queries in the light of the new discoveries and the most recent research will lead us to a renewed definition of the roman identity and its contribution to the dialogue among civilizations.

Jean-Yves MONCHAMBERT

Professor of Eastern archeology, specialist in Bronze Age and Iron (3rd to 1st millennia BC.), Monchambert worked on two major sites in Syria, Mari and Ugarit. He is currently in charge of the archeological site of Yanouh in the Lebanese mountains.

“The re-discovery of the Orient in the 19th Century”

Misled for ages by the biblical traditional concepts and by the classical authors, the quest for the Orient in the 19th century has taken a completely different shape thanks to the decoding of the cuneiform scripts and the discovery of the first archeological sites in Mesopotamia and the Levant.

This new vision has brought to light a rich and ancient civilization whose historical longevity cannot be questioned.

Juliette VION-DURY

Professor of general and comparative literature at the University of Limoges, Juliette Vion-Dury focuses her researches on the literary resources of the psychoanalytic theory and creativity.

“The occidental-oriental Divan: Goethe reads Hafez”

In 1813, a translation into German of the Divan by Hafiz appeared. Goethe replied with a West-Eastern Divan in which he poured his poetical writings and erudite comments. Through his dialogue with the Persian authors, Goethe established his theory on creativity boosting though his idea on the *Weltliteratur* (worldwide literature). Both were highly expressed in the drama to which he devoted his last years, Faust part II.

Michel BRIX

Born in 1958, Master of Research at Namur University (Belgium) he is the author of thirty works on the French literature of the 18th and 19th centuries.

“Nerval and the quest for Arcadia, the travel in the Orient to Aurelia”

Associated to the Greco-roman religion, the Arcadia represents the first quest for Nerval. However, the travel to the Orient expresses the quest for “unknown and perfumed islands”.

Jean-Yves MASSON

Born in 1962, professor of comparative literature at Paris-Sorbonne University, he runs since 2006 the Comparative Literature Center founded by Pierre Brunel. He has some publications on European Poetry and Theater since the beginning of the German Romanism till the contemporary era. Masson translated over thirty poetry books amongst them the last collection of William Butler Yeats by “Verdier” editions (1990 to 2006) and by the same editor the 20th century Anthology of Irish poetry (1996).

“The Orient of W.B. Yeats”

The Orient in the poetry of William Butler Yeats (1862-1939), is not only a geographical place; it is above all a “spiritual Orient”, a dawn of truth, enlightenment and a source of knowledge. Although greatly inspired by the Celtic mythology, the thoughts of this great Irish poet have been stimulated by non-exotic Eastern cultures perspectives.

We will focus here on studying some figures of his poetry which strongly reveal the influence of the eastern images such as : The Queen of Saba, The Magi and the semi-fictional characters in the narrative poem entitled “The Gift of Haroun Al Rashid” where Yeats lived the fantasy of The One Thousand and One Nights in a very intimate experience which inspires his gifted writing.

Dominique MILLET-GÉRARD

Dominique Millet-Gérard is a Professor of French Literature at Paris-Sorbonne University. Graduated from the *École Normale Supérieure*, Assistant Professor of Classics and English with a PHD degree, she is a Specialist in Claudel and spiritual poetry concept, in the Latin tradition and more generally in the European one.

“The axial and the oriental as seen by Louis Massignon”

We will study the interest that Louis Massignon had in the Arabic and Persian Orient as well as the Far East (Japan) in a framework of inner quest summarizing the aesthetic and the spiritual. We'll see how a great philological, archeological and sociological erudition and a poetic approach homogenously blend in a constant introspective search and meditation.

Didier ALEXANDRE

Professor of French Literature, Didier Alexandre is the Director of the Department of French and Comparative Literature at the University of Paris Sorbonne "Paris IV". President of the 20th Century French Study's Society, he is the author of many works on Paul Claudel such as "*Genèse de la poétique de Paul Claudel*, Paris, 2000 ; "*Paul Claudel, du matérialisme au lyrisme*, Paris, 2004; on the modern and contemporary poetry of Apollinaire, Michaux, Char and Segalen , and on the contemporary novel of "Claude Simon".

"The literature in accordance with their experience in Aden; Paul Nizan and Frederic Prokosch"

Paul Nizan, author of "Aden-Arabia, 1932" through his studies of Gide, Camus, Battle, and Yourcenar has been credited along with Frederic Prokosch , author of "Hasards de l'Arabie heureuse, 1953,1955 for having introduced Arabia and the "Arabic East" into literary geography.

Aden illustrated the focal point for common historic controversies that should be overcome. In Aden, Paul Nizan put an end to the literary East-West conflict that began during the First World War. Thereafter at the footsteps of Rimbaud, he bids farewell to such literature

Following the Second World War, Frederic Prokosch who was away from any ideological differences on Arabia and beyond Aden, wrote a novel hailed by French critics as an overhaul of the romance writing.

Philip KENNEDY

Philip F. Kennedy is associate professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic studies at New York University; he has authored or edited several books about Arabic literature and is currently Faculty Director of The New York University Abu Dhabi Institute.

"Borges and the Arabian Nights"

Examines several stories penned by the Argentinean writer that are either inspired by or allude to aspects of the Arabian Nights, suggesting in particular a certain narrative epistemology and aesthetic by which he was influenced, rewriting it variously into his literary homage.

Bertrand WESTPHAL

Bertrand Westphal is a professor of general and comparative literature at the University of Limoges where he is in charge of the interdisciplinary research team. He is the author of many essays such as: *The Eye of the Mediterranean*; a literary odyssey (Aube 2005) and the *Geocritique. Realistic, fictitious and space* (Minuit, 2007). His works are focused on the literary theories of space and postmodernism.

"Rooms with view on the Orient"

We'll see how the hotel, which is completely a fictional place with insignificant use (transitional shelter), will turn to be an exotic setting (in terms of western characters). The

reference will be oriental and the characters Indian and Japanese. We will refer to novels and stories such as *Queda la noche* by Soledad Puértolas; *Les Grandes Blondes* by Jean Echenoz; *Nocturne indien* by Antonio Tabucchi and *Faire l'amour* by Jean-Philippe Toussaint. It will appear to us how the hotel becomes a kind of a third space, where the persons acquire certain knowledge of the Orient not necessarily abstract or neutral.

Didier GAZAGNADOU

Professor of Anthropology in the Department of Sociology at the University of Paris VIII Vincennes Saint Denis, Didier Gazagnadou is a Team Member of the Research Network on "comparative anthropology of Muslim societies" (Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale-Ax Sociologie comparative, Collège de France / EHESS / CNRS).

Author of: *Joseph Needham*, a Taoist honor FELIN Editions, Paris 1991; *La poste à relais*, *La diffusion d'une technique de pouvoir à travers l'Eurasie*, Editions Kimé Paris 1994 and *La diffusion des techniques et les cultures*, Kimé Editions, Paris 2008. He is currently occupying the position of Counselor for Cooperation and Cultural Action at the French Embassy, Abu Dhabi.

“Does the Orient really exist?”

The concept of Orient dates long ago in the history and still alive till present in the European thought. By retracing in the history we can easily realize that it is linked to the western concept. This large partitioning has often allowed conflicts to emerge between societies. We underline that this kind of division has recently arose in many societies so-called "Eastern". Anthropology of the twentieth century has never risen up these two concepts which are completely rejected by the globalization process.