Building Confessional Identities in the Ottoman Empire (16th-18th centuries)

The collaboration between political and religious authorities, directed at imposing religious uniformity and at establishing denominational boundaries in the course of Early Modern times, has traditionally been investigated within the interpretative framework of ‘Confessionalization’ - a concept originally developed and applied only to the European (and especially German) case. Nonetheless, recent historiography has begun to investigate the conditions that shaped the construction of a Sunni Islamic orthodoxy between the late Middle Ages and the Early Modern period, by considering the possibility of applying the historiographical paradigm of Confessionalization also to the Ottoman Empire.

In following and broadening this approach, the aim of this workshop is to carry on in a comparative way a reflection upon the progressive construction of confessional identities within the communities of the Ottoman Empire. Such a process was almost always determined by the confrontation or clash with a rival religious group (Sunni vs. Shiite Muslims, Orthodox vs. Catholic Christians, Sephardic vs. charismatic and mystic Jewish movements) or with the members of the other communities. A special attention will be placed on the two-folded nature of this process (top-down and bottom-up) as well on the possible comparisons and on the interweaving relationship between the Catholic and the Ottoman ‘Confessionalization’.

ORGANISATION SCIENTIFIQUE

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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6

9 H 00
Welcome
Fabrice Jesné (École française de Rome, Directeur des études, Époques moderne et contemporaine)

General Introduction
Cesare Santus (École française de Rome)

9 H 30
An Early Modern Sunnitization?
Chair: Nathalie Clayer

Tijana Krstić (CEU, Budapest)
Conceptualizing the ‘People of the Sunna and the Community’ (ehl-i sunnet ve cema’at) and their Detractors in Ottoman Heresiographical Works, 16th-17th Centuries

Derin Terzioglu (Boğaziçi University, Istanbul)
Reckoning with confessional ambiguity in the confessional age: Alid loyalty and Sufism in the Ottoman Empire, 16th-17th centuries

Discussion

Coffee break

11 H 30
The Ottoman Jewry
Chair: Bernard Heyberger

Roni Weinstein (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
Structuring Jewish community life and religious traditions in the early modern period: The Confessionalization perspective

Yaron Ben-Naeh (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
The Dialectics of Confessional Processes among Ottoman Jews

Discussion

14 H 30
Eastern Christianity: Orthodox and Catholics
Chair: Tijana Krstić

Elif Bayraktar Tellan (Istanbul Medeniyet University) & Hasan Çolak (Leiden University)
Inter-communal Relations in the Ottoman Empire and Re-Making of the Orthodox Confession in the 18th Century

Aurélien Girard (Université de Reims, CERHIC)
Inventing Catholic identities for Arabic-speaking Christians in the Bilâd al-Shâm (Maronites and Melkites, 17th and 18th centuries)

Bernard Heyberger (EHESS, CéSoR)
The limits of a Catholic Confessionalization in the Ottoman Empire through the issues of fasting and marriage

Discussion

17 H 00
Roundtable with Nathalie Clayer (EHESS, CETOBAC) and Tassos Anastassiadis (École française d’Athènes)