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SOCIETÀ PER GLI STUDI SUL MEDIO ORIENTE

TITOLO/TITLE: Questioning “Civilization”, “Reform” and “(Post)Modernity” in the Ottoman and Post Ottoman Space (XIX-XXI centuries)

PROPONENTE/I – PROPONENT/s: TINA MARAUCCI-NICOLA MELIS

ABSTRACT (1500 parole/words):

The conception of the cultural and political developments in the Ottoman Empire and its successor states as the result of a unidirectional transfer from the West, this latter being understood monolithically as the essence of progress, has been a key that continues to exert considerable influence on the landscape of various disciplines. From studies centred on a political-historical perspective to literary-historical studies, the specificity of political and cultural phenomena in the Ottoman and post-Ottoman space has often been interpreted as a mere “import” of exogenous models and canons. Even though this paradigm has been repeatedly challenged in recent decades, it would be difficult to claim that the possibilities of rethinking the relationship between global changes and local phenomena have been fully exploited.

Taking a *long durée* perspective, this panel aims to gather insights from scholars across the humanities and social sciences to contribute to reflecting on the phenomenon of the circulation of cultural models. The aim is to highlight the agency of local actors in the appropriation, reworking and rewriting of institutions, concepts, literary forms, and moral and aesthetic values to achieve a more holistic approach to understanding phenomena in the MENA region between the 19th and 21st centuries, against the backdrop of general changes such as the transformation and collapse of empires, the construction of nation-states, the polarisation of the Cold War era and neo-liberalism.

Among the many interpretive keys that can be offered, proposals that reflect on these possible, but not exclusive, research questions are particularly welcome:

- 1) How can we make sense in the Ottoman and post-Ottoman space of the concept of racialisation understood as a dynamic concept with multiple declinations and outcomes shaped by the agency of both racialising and racialised identities?
- 2) How are “exogenous” cultural models and artistic expressions translated in the target contexts? Is it mere reception, rewriting or rather reinvention?
- 3) What are the archives of political and cultural practices that contribute to (re)shaping the structure and ideology of institutions, political organisations, and ideologies in the post-Ottoman space?

In a global context in which defensive identity-building mechanisms are re-emerging, often in the name of preserving an all-encompassing “rational worldview” charged with intense epistemological violence, we believe that this reflection can take up the threads of a debate aimed at rethinking the phenomena of intercultural contamination and hybridisation, providing new insights into the different declinations of concepts and phenomena such as “civilisation”, “reform”, “modernity” and “postmodernity”.

Selected bibliography.

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PROFILO ACCADEMICO DEL/DELLA/DEI/DELLE PROPONENTE/I – SHORT BIO OF PROPONENTS

Tina Maraucci is Assistant Professor of Turkish Language and Literature at the University of Firenze. She is author of *Leggere Istanbul, Memoria e lingua nella narrativa turca contemporanea*, FUP Firenze 2020. She also published several contributions concerning Turkish contemporary novel in both collective volumes and academic journals.

Nicola Melis, a specialist in Near Eastern and Ottoman history, is an Associate Professor at the University of Cagliari. He is a member of the editorial advisory boards of some journals and academic associations. Prof. Melis' current research deals with the idea of Ottoman Africa, past to present. He has shared his ongoing work at numerous international conferences and has authored several recent articles on the subject

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