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SOCIETÀ PER GLI STUDI SUL MEDIO ORIENTE

TITOLO/TITLE: Vernacularising Law & Order in the Eastern Mediterranean (1791-1849)

PROPONENTE/I – PROPONENT/s: GIANLUCA PAROLIN

ABSTRACT (1500 parole/words):

The American and French Revolutions reignited the debate on sovereignty, power (and its separation), representation, individual rights, and the rule of law in the political arena. In doing so, they also proposed new solutions in the form of codified Constitutions. American and French revolutionary ideas circulated globally and animated local debates; just like American English and French had to develop a new vocabulary to convey the new conceptions of liberal constitutionalism (often by revisiting existing vocabulary), so did all other languages.

In the Eastern Mediterranean, French revolutionary ideas (and their constitutional arrangements) made themselves physically present through French armies. It is the case of the Ionian islands, where French troops arrived right after the fall of the Republic of Venice (1797-1799). And of Egypt and Syria, where Napoleon himself led the troops (1798-1801). But news of French Constitutions had reached the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean well before French troops, and their influence stretched well beyond their military reach.

A complex network of concepts and ideas started developing in a fascinatingly intricate network of (apparently distant) languages, cultural elites, and political arrangements between the end of the 18th century and the middle of the 19th century where the Ottoman empire extended its sovereignty and suzerainty. These early vernacularisations laid the first foundations of new legal systems embracing legal positivism as their jurisprudential underpinning.

The panel intends to explore those spaces of hybridisation and contamination in the Eastern Mediterranean where law and order were vernacularised in their various forms. In doing so, the panel aims at bringing back into a shared conversation Modern Greek, Ottoman Turkish, Egyptian and Levantine Arabic.

The panel aims to move beyond the contentious debates that have persisted since the mid-1950s between Bernard Lewis and Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, later joined by Amy Ayalon, concerning the formulation of novel political terminologies in the Middle East. In doing so, it seeks to transcend discussions focused solely on cultural "encounters" or the Arab "rediscovery," viewing these through the wider lens of global shifts in legal philosophies. Furthermore, by incorporating Modern Greek perspectives into the discourse, the panel endeavours to de-essentialise the discussion and explore how the broader Eastern Mediterranean region, with its shared historical backdrop, has grappled with new models of law and governance.

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

Gianluca Parolin is a comparative lawyer working on constitutional design, State-Islam relations, citizenship, shifting semiotics of law, and images of law in popular culture. – He holds a PhD in Public Law from the University of Turin, and is Professor of Law at the Aga Khan University in London, where he also leads the Governance Programme. – From 2008 to 2015 he taught constitutional law at Cairo University and the American University in Cairo. – He is the author of *Citizenship in the Arab World* (Amsterdam University Press, 2009), and is currently working on a new book on the law's *imaginaire* in Egyptian television drama.

INDIRIZZO/I EMAIL/EMAIL ADDRESSES:

gianluca.parolin@aku.edu