



CALL FOR PAPERS

Occhiali – Rivista sul Mediterraneo islamico

POWER, AUTHORITY AND BODY: THE TRANSFORMATIONS OF ISLAM IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE BETWEEN THE 20TH AND THE 21ST CENTURY

Edited by Nathalie Clayer (EHESS - CNRS)
and Gianfranco Bria (UniCal - CETOBaC)



After thirty years, the publication of Alexander Popovic's book, *L'Islam Balkanique* (Berlin, Otto Harrassowitz, 1986), the academic studies on South-Eastern European Muslims have deeply changed due to many political events within the Balkan space and to several mutations in the field of social sciences.

The end of Cold War, the fragmentation of the Yugoslavian space and the beginning of European integration have contributed to changing the perception of Balkan Muslims, which was, after all, unclear and ambivalent: on the one hand, victims, representatives of a so-called "European Islam", moderate and tolerant; conversely, on the other hand, European bridgeheads of a radical Islam, of a transnational form of jihadism. In this labyrinth of ideological discourses and counter-discourses, the research had to learn how to disentangle and how to respond to the legitimate needs for understanding that came from the media and governments.

Nonetheless, the studies of South-East European Muslims have not been exclusively conditioned by political events – transformations in social sciences at the global level have also shaped the evolution of this topic. Alexander Popovic himself helped to place the study of Balkan Islam in the so-called "peripheral Muslim world", which included Muslims from China and Africa, through South-East Asia and Central Asia. In fact, if during the years 1990 and 2000 the researchers who were working on these



populations were mainly devoted to the question of the relations with the State and national identifications, the last decade has seen further “turns” (in the transnational sense for example, which led scholars to focus on movements of people, ideas and goods). At the same time, other researches has begun to explore other areas of study, such as the history of women and gender, social history, anthropology and the sociology of institutions, and, more recently, the strictly religious dimension.

Starting from this perspective, in the upcoming issue of the *Occhiali* review, we propose to develop a reflection on the relationship between power, authority and body in the framework of the transformations of Islam in the societies of Southeast Europe from the end of the Ottoman era on, in order to overcome those analyses that too often focus on the normative and institutional aspects only. The aim is to analyze the performative intervention of certain normative discourses and coercive techniques on the Islamic tradition, on the forms of socialization and on the more or less institutionalized civil and identity foundations of Balkan societies. In this sense, to conceive religion as power and knowledge makes it possible to distinguish, on one side, the institutional definition of religion given by the authorities – sometimes acting in a creative and / or rational way (in Weber's sense) – and, on the other hand, the meta-institutional dimension of the believers.

In South-East Europe, method, stories and practices of the exercise of authority have been reshaped by the processes of Ottoman disintegration and integration into other imperial and national orders, in which Muslims sometimes were *foreign* bodies. Even other factors were decisive throughout the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century: the establishment of authoritarian regimes in the inter-war period, the development of eugenics, the socialist secularization which established a system control and surveillance of the population which aimed at building an “authorized collective religious memory”, and finally post-socialist liberalization.

In this sense, the questions of the veil and the female role are paradigmatic and can be examined. Also other areas, such as rituals, consumption, sport, sociabilities, representations and bodily performance, as well as the intra- and inter-confessional tensions, can be heuristically interesting to analyze the process of secularization. The different social, symbolic and physical spaces in which one can observe the relations between power, authority and body (public space, school, administrations, etc.) will be considered too.



The articles must be sent by **31/05/2019** in a form compatible with the procedure of blind review: in the first page, the author's name, surname, email address, a brief biographic note, title and abstract; in the following pages, title, text and notes. Texts are accepted in Italian, English and French, written according to the editorial norms presented on the website (<http://phi.unical.it/wp34/occhiali/>), and no longer than 30.000 characters, including spaces (and including the notes and an English abstract no longer than 150 words), bibliography excluded. The article and the abstract must both be sent in a single file (.doc or .docx) to [**laboratorio.occhiali@gmail.com**](mailto:laboratorio.occhiali@gmail.com).