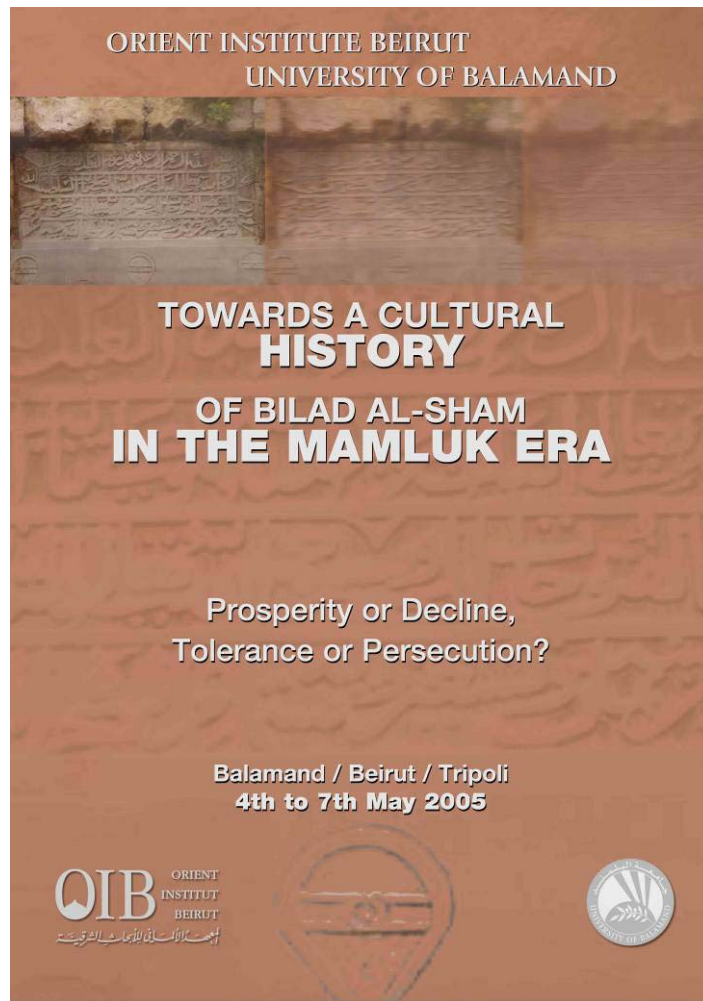


## CONFERENCE REPORT



A Cooperation of OIB and UOB

Directed by:  
Manfred Kropp (OIB)  
Georges Nahas (UOB)

Organized by:  
Mahmoud Haddad (UOB)  
Arnim Heinemann (OIB)  
Souad Slim (UOB)  
Stefan Weber (OIB)

With great support of the teams of OIB and UOB

## I General Remarks

The opening lecture was held at OIB on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2005. All panels of the conference had to take place at Balamand because the Orient-Institut Beirut as an equal co-organizer does not have a conference room big enough for international conferences.

The cooperation with the team of UOB served as a basis for an effective course of events. The intense working atmosphere led to vivid and fruitful discussions after the papers were given.

These discussions were recorded to serve as an audio document for the preparation of the publication in the future.

Starting with the first evening, the stimulating scientific conversation lasted over all the four conference days. Due to the additional program - as the field trip to Tripoli, guided by Stefan Weber, and the visit of the monastery, guided by Souad Slim - it also went beyond the Panels everyday.

The echo of the participants as well as that of the auditors was very positive. The conference was judged as important, instructive and enjoyable.

The Papers will be published as a joint publication of UOB and OIB in the OIB edition BTS.

The public interest in the conference attracted a scientific and intellectual audience from whole Lebanon to attend. The bus shuttle from and to Beirut everyday was reliable and useful.

The press coverage of the event was focused on the main subject, the Mamluk Era.

The financial support by the German Research Foundation (DFG) was essentially helpful to realize the project.

## II Final Program

**Tuesday, May 03, 2005, 19:00 Orient-Institut Beirut**

### **OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE**

Manfred Kropp

Welcome speech

Jorgen Nielsen

Opening lecture: *Christian Participation in the Ayyubid and Mamluk state: A historiographical Reflection.*

WELCOME RECEPTION AT THE OIB

**Wednesday, May 04, 2005**

**08:00 Bus Transfer Beirut(Hotel)-Balamand(University)**

**10:00 - 12:30 Panel I: State, Administration and Relation to Society**

Albrecht Fuess

*Legends against Injustice: Thoughts on the Relationship between the Mamluk Military Elite and their Arab Subjects.*

John Meloy

*Extortion and the Mamluk State.*

Ahmad Abdelsalam

*The Political and Religious Appointment as Muhtasib in the Mamluk Era.*

Ahmad Hutait

*The Position of the Copts in Mamluk Administration – the Example of Sharaf al-Din-Nushu´.*

André Nassar

*The Christians as Prosecuting Lawyers in Damascus and Aleppo.*

**Chairperson: Souad Slim**

12:30 – 14:30 Lunch Break

**14:30-17:30 Panel II: Fields of Cultural Production: a) Literature**

Axel Havemann

*The Chronicle of Ibn Iyas as a Source for Social and Cultural History from Below.*

Syrinx von Hees

*Reading Koran Commentaries as a Source for Changing Mentalities.*

Thomas Herzog

*Reconsidering the siyar sha'biyya: How "popular" was mamluk popular*

*literature?*

16:00 – 16:15 Coffee Break

Antoine Doumit

*The Development of Historiography in the Mamluk Era – the Example of al-Maqrizi.*

Nayla Kaedbay

Hayat Bualuan

*The Christians under Mamluk rule in the Qalqashandi Subh al-a'sha.*

Ray Jabre-Mouawwad

*Christian martyrs in Tripoli in the Mamluk Era.*

**Chairperson: Floreal Sanagustin**

**Thursday, May 05, 2005**

**10:00 VISIT OF THE OLD CITY TRIPOLI:**

***The Mamluk City and its Ottoman Change***

**Guided by Stefan Weber**

12:30 – 14:30 Lunch Break

**14:30 – 17:30 Panel III: *Fields of Cultural Production: b) Science***

Nuha Malaeb

*The Scientific Position of Maghrebinians in Bilad al-Sham in the Mamluk Era.*

George Saliba

*"Gathering the Stars": Scientific Activities during Mamluk Times.*

Muna Sharani

*The Navy in the Mamluk Era – a Study of Mechanic Weaponry.*

Anis Shaya

*The Fortifications between the Francs and the Mamluks.*

16:30 – 16:45 Coffee Break

Floréal Sanagustin

*La transmission du savoir scientifique à l'époque mamelouke.*

Linda Northrup

*Qalawun's Hospital in Cairo (al-Bimaristan al-Mansuri) and its Impact on the Medical Sciences in the Mamluk Period: End of a Renaissance or Beginning of a New Era?*

**Chairperson: Manfred Kropp**

**Friday, May 06, 2005**

**09:00 – 15:30 Panel IV: Fields of Cultural Production: c) Arts**

Doris Behrens-Abu Seif

*The status of the craftsman in the late Mamluk period.*

Howayda al-Harithy

*Writings on the Wall: Mamluk Monuments of Tripoli.*

Stefan Weber

*Rebuilding the city: Damascus after Timur Lenk.*

10:30 – 10:45 Coffee Break

Nada Helou

*L'élément croisé dans l'architecture mamelouke à Tripoli.*

Matt Immerzeel

*Christian art during Mamluk period.*

12:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break

Sami Makarem

*Arabic calligraphy and Sufism.*

Elyas al-Zayyat

*The Christian art during the Mamluk period – a transition between Ayyubids and Ottomans.*

**Chairperson: George Saliba**

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee Break

16:00 – 17:30

**VISIT OF THE MONASTERY**

Guided by Souad Slim

**Saturday, May 07, 2005**

**9:00-15:00 Panel V: Social Groups and their Interaction**

Manfred Kropp

*Reaching out to the South: the relations of the Egyptian Mamluks with Ethiopia.*

Elias al-Qattar

*Maronites, Shia and Druzes in the "Jabal Lubnan" – the Dialectics of Oppression and Tolerance.*

David Thomas

*Christian-Muslim Misunderstanding in the Fourteenth Century, the Correspondence between Christians in Cyprus and Muslims in Damascus.*

10:30 – 10:45 Coffee break

Samir Khalil Samir (SJ)

*Chrétiens d’Egypte sous les Mamelouks bahrides (1250-1382).*

Shaun O’Sullivan

*Coptic Conversion to Islam under the Early Mamluks: turning-point or footnote?*

Aliya Sa’idi

*Marriage and Mental Illness in the Mamluk Period.*

Mahmoud Haddad

*The "new" Mamluks*

**Conclusion**

**Final Discussion**

Chairperson: Mahmoud Haddad

13:30 – 15:30 Lunch Break (Jbeil)

**16:00 Bus Transfer to Beirut (Hotel)**

### **III Summary of Selected Papers**

**Jorgen S. Nielsen**<sup>1</sup>: *The participation of Christians and Jews in the Ayyubid and Mamluk state: An historiographical reflection*

In his introductory speech to the conference, Jorgen S. Nielsen gave an extensive overview on the situation of urban studies with regard to the position of *dhimmi*-culture in Mamluk society. In particular he referred to the failure of the historiographical concept of the “Islamic City” in grasping the particularities of development of local forms of *dhimmi*-culture. However, contemporary social history specifically analyses *dhimmi* participation on the communal level in Ayyubid and Mamluk cities. *Dhimmi* self-government enabled them to freely participate in city life and to cooperate with other social and religious groups, according to local forms of *dhimmi* policy. Violence was not the result of anti-*dhimmi* policy. Instead it was directed against target groups in general, depending on the focus of local politics.

**Albrecht Fuess**<sup>2</sup>: *Legends against injustice: Thoughts on the relationship between the Mamluk military elite and their Arab subjects*

In his presentation, Albrecht Fuess focused on the relationship between Mamluk rulers and their Arab subjects. He pointed out the legal, cultural and social differences which separated both. The Mamluk ruling class, as he called them, were able to hoard a significant number of privileges which enabled them to exert a sort of “slave colonialism” over their subjects. This hold on the Arab society was only broken on very rare occasions, when governors for example allowed mutilation of Mamluk soldiers’ corpses, or a sentence was spoken against a Mamluk, events which often found their way into chronicles. However, on the whole even the ‘ulama supported the Mamluks’ rule as a necessary evil against foreign invasions. Fuess was able to back up his claims with a manifold of examples.

**John Meloy**<sup>3</sup>: *The historiography of extortion in the Mamluk political system*

The extortion of protection money in urban and rural context by members of the ruling Mamluk elite, and its representation by fifteenth century Mamluk historians opens up a window behind the curtains of the Mamluk State. The practise of extortion paralysed the Mamluk state to the extent that those extorting money acted on the patronage of members of the civil administration. The extortion functioned well, preceding the Mamluk elite with funds and control until the fifteenth century when it became so widespread that it started to hinder the economy. At that moment Mamluk historians opened up a debate on this phenomenon, trying to discern the reason for its development. The comparison of these historians’ accounts, and the analyses of their discourse provided a valuable and rare insight into the evolution of the Mamluk state.

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<sup>1</sup> University of Birmingham.

<sup>2</sup> Universität Erfurt

<sup>3</sup> American University of Beirut

**Axel Havemann<sup>4</sup>:** *The chronicle of Ibn Iyas as a source for social and cultural history from below*

Axel Havemann's venture into Mamluk social and cultural history dealt with Ibn Iyas' chronicles and his narratives of lower and middle class crime in the Mamluk society. These chronicles stand apart from works of his contemporaries in that they highlight the history of social strata which cultural historiography of the Mamluk era has hitherto neglected. The chronicles contain narrations of capital crimes (murder rape and heresy) and so called "soft stories" (alcohol/drug abuse and curiosities). The chronicles also point out that verdicts were often passed according to class and status of the perpetrator or the victim respectively. All in all, thus Havemann, Ibn Iyas chronicles would constitute a perfect starting point for any historiographical exercise on daily life and behaviour in the middle and lower classes.

**Syrinx von Hees<sup>5</sup>:** *Reading Qur'an Commentaries as a source for changing mentalities*

In her study about generation perceptions, Syrinx von Hees analysed six Mamluk authors about their use of Qur'an quotes alluding to certain Sura in the Qur'an which are concerned with family affairs in general, and specifically with the treatment of the elderly. According to von Hees, these quotes are symptomatic for the general change in perception of mentalities and concepts which the Mamluk society went through. This meant that the individual's spectrum of choice changed as the society was slowly conditioned to accustom new ideas. The interplay between the individual's perception and society's norms remained dynamic. The Qur'an commentaries provide an overview of the often conflicting currents of perception within Mamluk society without representing a string of linear changes towards a new perception.

**Thomas Herzog<sup>6</sup>:** *Reconsidering the siyar sha'biyya: How "popular" was Mamluk popular literature?*

Thomas Herzog's paper concerned the emergence of commercial popular literature. This type of literature (*'ama*) stood in conflict with the "high" literature (*khasa*) supported by the *'ulama*. The *'ama* catered for the literary taste of the emerging middle classes by producing vast amounts of 'light' stories and hagiographies, mostly in dialect. Even though several *fatwa* existed against them they continued being spread in performances and readings. Their 'popularity' is contested among historians, due to the fact that many authors, as well as the public, were also members of the upper classes. His many examples showed that the *siyar sha'biyya* was not so popular as one might think, and that it was inspired by a manifold of sources, popular narratives as well as *khasa*, depending on the time, space and circumstance of its publication.

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<sup>4</sup> Freie Universität Berlin.

<sup>5</sup> Universität Bonn.

<sup>6</sup> Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg

**Nayla Kaedbay<sup>7</sup> and Hayat Bualuan<sup>8</sup>: *The Christians under Mamluk rule in the Qalqashandi Subh al-a'sha***

The paper by Hayat Bualuan and Nayla Kaedbay used *Qalqashandis Subh al a'sha fi sina'at al-insha* in order to elaborate on the relations between Christians and the Mamluk central government in Egypt and *Bilad al-Sham*. In Egypt, Mamluk policy towards the Coptic minority was very ambivalent. The Mamluk administration profited from the Copts' knowledge and administrative skills while at the same time periodically restricting its tolerance of the minority. Such shows of power were often accompanied by mass conversions to Islam. Violence and discrimination towards Copts did not stop after conversion, as the Copts were seen as an ethnic as much as a religious minority, not to be trusted. Even though Copts were regularly banned from office or from holding religious ceremonies, this usually reverted to normality after the wave of antagonism against them had subsided.

**Ray Jabre-Mouawwad<sup>9</sup>: *Christian martyrs in Tripoli in the Mamluk era.***

This paper treated the „making of” martyrs during and after the conquest of Tripoli and its surroundings by the Mamluks after 1289. Jabre-Mouawwad made reference to two martyrs, one Greek-Orthodox and one Maronite, as case studies for the analyses of martyrdom in the Mamluk era. The local populace of Christians showed different reactions to the conquest: the Maronites for example revolted, and were hit hard in a counter strike from Damascus. Renewed crusade plans by Clement V did not help to promote an atmosphere of trust, and left the Mamluk masters suspicious of their Christian subjects, lest they cooperate with a renewed Frankish invasion. The raid on Alexandria further promoted a policy of repression along the Syrian coast. Most martyrdom was recorded in elegies and hagiographies, which are rich in references to contemporary documents and serve as a basis for research.

**George Saliba<sup>10</sup>: „*Gathering the Stars*“: *Scientific Activities during Mamluk Times.***

George Saliba put up the thesis that the Mamluk era saw a general innovation in the sciences, which he pitched against the widespread notion that the Mamluk era constituted a decline in these disciplines. He quoted a number of scientists, among others Mu'ayyad al-Din al-'Urdu, who, according to Saliba, put the founding stone for modern astronomy. The Copernician models and al-Din al-'Urdu's re-evaluation of the Ptolemeian model share many similarities, which raises the question whether European astronomers would have known the earlier works of their Mamluk counterparts. Lastly, the issue on the promotion of sciences in the Mamluk administration was raised. According to Saliba, the fusion between astrology and astronomy benefited both, leading to a vast advance on the Europeans in the field of astronomy.

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<sup>7</sup> American University of Beirut.

<sup>8</sup> American University of Beirut.

<sup>9</sup> Université Saint-Joseph.

<sup>10</sup> University of Columbia

**Floréal Sanagustin<sup>11</sup>:** *La transmission du savoir scientifique à l'époque mamelouke.*

The transmission of scientific knowledge happened along two epistemological axis: rational science on the one hand (e.g. philosophy, medicine), and traditional science on the other hand (e.g. Qur'anic exegesis, Hadith). In the Mamluk era, an "Islamisation" of rational sciences, such as medicine, took place. Many of the scientific authors linked Qur'anic studies with rational sciences. They found allusions to bodily hygiene in the Qur'anic texts or Hadith literature, and founded them using rational science. Thus they were at the same time confirming the role of the Qur'an as "manual for life", and founding new principles of scientific approach. Arguably, this method saved disciplines such as medicine from being dismissed because of their concern with pure reason instead of divine inspiration. Some of these attempts even resulted in medicine being dismissed in favour of good faith and behaviour as being the main reason for good health (Ibn Khaldun).

**Linda Northrup<sup>12</sup>:** *Qalawun's hospital in Cairo (al-Bimarestan al-Mansuri) and its impact on the medical science in the Mamluk period: End of a renaissance or beginning of a new era?*

Linda Northrup drafted a vivid and detailed image of scientific progress and medical theory in the Qalawun hospital. The hospital found itself, due to its rich endowment, in the position to pursue scientific research in a new direction: it used a synthesis of theological and medical theory to promote scientific advance. Its training facilities served as a base from which this new approach to medicine could counter Ayyubid medical tradition. However ambitions were cut short when the concepts was caught up in the battle between theological and secular currents. Finally, development of a new formula was cut short and the facilities research and teaching abilities were curtailed and Qalawun hospital found itself being at the end of medical renaissance rather than at its foundations.

**Doris Behrens-Abu Seif<sup>13</sup>:** *The status of the craftsman in the late Mamluk period.*

This paper dealt with the changing status of Mamluk craftsmen (mu'allim) in the fifteenth century. Doris Behrens Abu-Seif used a host of primary material including signatures, epigraphic material and literary sources. These sources show that craftsmen were able, according to their efficiency, to gain significant recognition and status within the Mamluk society. Even though they met the opposition of the established powers, they were eventually able to become part of the establishment. Their improved positions enabled them to inscribe their own distinctive markers on their works of art. This culminated in the presence of the artist's signature in the central portion of the building, vase, etc. Thus, the visible arts became more prominent and artistic production became diversified.

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<sup>11</sup> Institut français à Damas

<sup>12</sup> University of Toronto.

<sup>13</sup> SOAS London.

**Howayda al-Harithy<sup>14</sup>: *Mamluk Architecture of Tripoli.***

Howayda al-Harithy paper focused on Arabic inscriptions and calligraphies in public spaces and on works of arts in the Mamluk era. Calligraphy flourished not just as artistic ventures but also as shows of power and influence of Mamluk elite. Non the less their importance for studies of political and artistic culture was neglected.

In this context she distinguished between textual and visual interpretations and functions. The inscriptions often served a dual role as works of arts inasmuch as of transmitters of qur'anic or sultanic messages. Thus, for example, the power of the sultan could be secured even in the peripheries of the empire by publicly is playing his decrees. She supported her arguments using a variety of photographic examples from Mamluk architecture still to be found in contemporary Tripoli.

**Stefan Weber<sup>15</sup>: *Rebuilding the city: Damascus after Timur Lenk.***

Stefan Weber's presentation opened up on perspectives of city planning after devastation and the restructuring of public space on the example of the rebuilding and redrafting of Damascus after Timur Lenk. Using archaeological data gathered on the site, he was able to draw a picture of the slow process of rebuilding, and its effect on the city structure around the Umayyad mosque. While infrastructure, such as water supplies, remained intact, much of the surrounding buildings were either destroyed during or after the attack. Building complexes, such as the Suq al-Sagha, were modified, but retained their structural continuity, while others were relocated to make space for residential areas. The buildings which were newly built or changed, show the emerging new techniques of colour pasting and use of medallions. The destruction opened up new ways for emerging craftsmen, apart from giving city planners the opportunity to use innovative building techniques on a large scale.

**Nada Helou<sup>16</sup>: *L'influence croisée dans l'architecture mamelouke de Tripoli.***

According to Nada Helou, many elements of pre-Mamluk Christian structures can be found in Mamluk structures. She cites the example of four churches which were heavily modified, or even destroyed, after the Mamluk conquest of the city. However, many architectural features such as the form of the minarets or the decoration of the mosques built in the place of these churches recall Christian motives. The usage of distinctively Christian motives in new structures was continued up to the point where some of these elements became typical of local architecture. The survey of Christian elements can even help determine the emplacement and structure of pre-Mamluk Christian Tripoli. Even though the usage of these elements was widespread, any reference to the larger Christian background of Tripoli was eradicated by the new Mamluk masters.

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<sup>14</sup> American University of Beirut.

<sup>15</sup> Orient Institut Beirut.

<sup>16</sup> University of Lebanon.

**Matt Immerzeel**<sup>17</sup>: *Christian art during the Mamluk period.*

The comparison between Christian art in „non-occupied” territory, and Christian art under Mamluk rule was the main focus of Matt Immerzeel’s work. According to Immerzeel, masters of Christian art had been present in the area of the Syrian coast before the advent of the Mamluk rule. Afterwards, thus Immerzeel, the skilfulness of the artists decreased, and many works of art were either repaired by local, less skilled artists, or painted over. This points to a discontinuity of the presence of Christian masters in Mamluk territory. However, a continuity of the development of the themes led Immerzeel to the assumption that communication between Christian masters in Cyprus and their local counterparts on the Syrian coast existed. Historians find it difficult to survey the field, as many of the works have fallen into decay and were destroyed.

**Manfred Kropp**<sup>18</sup>: *Reaching out to the South: the relations of the Egyptian Mamluks with Ethiopia*

In his presentation Manfred Kropp illustrated the Ethiopian Mamluk relations on the bases of a primary document: a letter of the Ethiopian emperor Zar’a-Ya’qob to sultan Jaqmaq from the fifteenth century. His main aim was to establish a historiography of relations between these two powers using a survey of available material concerning the correspondence between them. This notably included correspondence on the occasion of repressions against Christians in Mamluk Egypt and Syria. Relations were marked by a certain amount of aggressivity and suspicion due to the involvement of Mamluks in the election of the Ethiopian Metropolitane, and the consequences of the Crusades. The mental climate had changed compared to pre-Mamluk relations, as far as pre-Mamluk sources can be found and evaluated.

**David Thomas**<sup>19</sup>: *Christian-Muslim Misunderstanding in the Fourteenth Century, the Correspondence between Christians in Cyprus and Muslims in Damascus.*

Three letters from the 14<sup>th</sup> century were the main protagonists in Sir David’s paper. These letters form part of correspondence, which Thomas assumes to be fictional, by an unknown Cypriot author between himself and Ibn Tamiyya and Dimashqi on the other side. According to David Thomas the authors knowledge of Dimashqi shows that he was most likely a convertite who fled to Cyprus. The correspondence was hitherto seen as factual by historians, but a lack of mention by both Muslim authors points, according to Thomas, to the fact that both authors had never been written to. An argumentative level the Cypriot author seemed to misinterpret the theological discourse between Christianity and Islam in that he misunderstood the exegetic principles of both religions.

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<sup>17</sup> University of Leiden.

<sup>18</sup> Orient Institut Beirut.

<sup>19</sup> University of Birmingham.

**Samir Khalil Samir<sup>20</sup>**: *Chrétiens d’Egypte sous les Mamelouks bahrides (1250 – 1382)*.

Samir Khalil Samir gave an extensive overview of the treatment of the Christian minority in Egypt. According to Samir, the Bahrid period marked a watershed in the treatment of Copts. In this period repressions became organised on a large scale not only on the popular level but also on an administrative level. However eviction of Copts from office often coincided with the start of economic rises. Mamluk power was thus caught up between popular pressure to get rid of the Copts and economic necessity integrate them. Mass conversion of Copts to Islam in order to circumvent the situation proved to be ineffective as “being Copt” was perceived to be a religious inasmuch as an ethnic, that is undeniable, stigma.

**Shaun O’Sullivan<sup>21</sup>**: *Coptic conversion to Islam under the early Mamluks: turning-point or foot-note ?*

Shaun O’Sullivan challenged the opinion that the Copts in Egypt were still important and influential community with an Egypt during the early Mamluk period. He bases his assumptions on reports by al-Maqrizi and studies of the spread of Islam in Anatolia and Iran in the pre-Mamluk era. This implies that Christianity had lost its influence and ability to resist Muslim conversion efforts, before the Mamluk administration formed plans to convert the Copts. Mamluk intervention through repression of the Coptic minority was only the last straw, and the results of a long evolution towards conversion to Islam. The actual peak of conversions, thus also the period of the most rapid decrease in the importance of the Coptic minority was before the advent of the Mamluks. The evolution of Coptic-Muslim relationship and conflict in Egypt has to be analysed in a wider historical context, without which the importance of conversions in the Mamluk state will be over-rated.

**Aliya Sa’idi<sup>22</sup>**: *Marriage and Mental Illness in the Mamluk Period*.

The field of social studies in the Mamluk period is still an underdeveloped subject. Aliya Sa’idis study tried to close this gap by analysing modes of female behaviour in marriage as found in a biographical dictionary by Sakhawi. She focused on details about marital life from the female perspective, especially pointing out cases of mental illness and their concordance with divorce polygamy. Particularly polygamy seemed to have been socially unacceptable and a source for mental illness of women whose husband were polygamous. Another solution seemed to have been serial monogamy. The sample of women presented showed definite trend towards mental illness when divorce or coercion of the husband into monogamy was impossible.

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<sup>20</sup> CEMAM Beirut

<sup>21</sup> University of Balamand.

<sup>22</sup> American University of Beirut.