

Workshop Report
ANNELIES MOORS

From 5 to 7 July 2002 a workshop on 'Scholarship and Activism in Islamic Family Law' was held at the Freie Universität Berlin, organized jointly by the Interdisciplinary Centre 'Social and Cultural History of the Middle East' at the Freie Universität Berlin (Katja Niethammer, Anna Würth), the AKMI (Arbeitskreis Moderne und Islam at the Wissenschaftskolleg Berlin, Georges Khalil), CIMEL (Centre of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law at SOAS, London, Lynn Welchman) and ISIM (Annelies Moors).

This meeting was the third in a series. The first workshop, convened by Anna Würth and Jamila Bargach and held in Berlin (June 2000), set out to create a network of scholars employing social science perspectives and methodologies in the study of family law. The second workshop, organized by Abdullahi an-Na'im and Laila al-Zwaini (ISIM, 'Rights-at-Home') at the annual European Institute Meeting in Florence (March 2001), discussed concepts of family, state, and civil society in Muslim societies. Legal and sociological perspectives were employed in order to discuss such issues as debates on family law reform in the 1990s and relations between family law and human rights issues. This third workshop focused on 'Scholarship and Activism' within the framework of a comparative and historical approach. Three main issues were highlighted: the production of knowledge about Islamic family law; processes of codification

and the nation-state; and activism, civil society, and the public sphere.

Discussing the production of knowledge about Islamic family law brought to the fore the urgency of developing a reflexive stance on the power/knowledge nexus in different local and historical settings. Tracing the histories of scholarship in the field of Islamic family law asks for investigating the ways in which research dealing with Islamic family law has been organized and institutionalized. It raises questions about the politics involved, be it in terms of colonial powers controlling their colonial subjects or present-day states trying to get a grip on minorities defined as Muslim. This also includes the programmes set up in Western academia for Muslim students dealing with such topics as family law.

Processes of codification are central to an understanding of contemporary debates on Islamic family law. In order to investigate the various historical trajectories of such processes

these need to be linked to the formation of nation-states. More detailed investigations of processes of codification point to the diversity in positions held by religious functionaries and state institutions, and argue against seeing either the state or religious authorities as a monolithic bloc. Researching the local specificities of processes of codification and the participants involved brings to the fore the relations and tensions between increased state control, a potentially flexible legal system and issues of accountability, in particular regarding their effects on the more vulnerable members of society.

Both the production of knowledge about family law and processes of codification intersect with the third main issue of debate, that is the various forms of activism related to family law, and the ways in which these relate to associational forms that are part of civil society and the more informal networks operating in the public sphere. Particular attention is

not only to be paid to the agendas of activists and the ways in which they interact with their publics (or not), but also to their frames of reference, such as local traditions and customs, international human rights law, Islamic legal traditions, and insights from the social sciences. Finally, all three topics require paying attention to transnational forms of cooperation and influencing that have become increasingly important both in the production of knowledge, in processes of codification, and amongst activists.

Presentations were given by Gamal Abdan-Nasser, Jamila Bargach, Nathalie Bernard-Maugiron, Léon Buskens, Bettina Dennerlein, Ivesa Lübben, Annelies Moors, Tazeen Mursheed, Dorothea Schulz, Lynn Welchman, Inken Wiese, and Anna Würth.

A co-authored publication by the network outlining the discussions and major themes is planned for 2003.

ANNUAL LECTURE

A Naqshbandi Timaque



PHOTO: WIM VREEBURG, 2002

Şerif Mardin delivering his lecture.

On 13 November 2002 Professor Şerif Mardin (Sabanci University, Istanbul) delivered the fourth ISIM Annual Lecture at the University of Nijmegen. His lecture focused on the impact of *Les aventures de Télémaque, fils d'Ulysse* by the 18th-century French author Fénelon on 19th-century Ottoman intellectuals, in particular in Khaldi-Naqshbandi circles in Istanbul.

Şerif Mardin is the author of path-breaking studies on Turkish intellectual and social history, including *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (1962) and *Religion and Social Change in Turkey* (1989). His lecture will be published in the ISIM Papers Series.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vacancy

The ISIM invites applications for the position of Academic Director, who is also simultaneously the holder of the ISIM Chair of Islamic Studies in the modern period at Leiden University. The Academic Director is responsible for the overall guidance and planning of the Institute's research programmes, the Ph.D. degree and post-doctoral programmes, and international cooperation, including exchange programmes and academic meetings, all conducted in association with the ISIM Chairs at the other ISIM participating universities. As holder of the ISIM Chair at Leiden University the candidate will be expected to teach and supervise undergraduate and graduate students. In administrative affairs the Academic Director is assisted by

ISIM Academic Director

the Executive Director, who is also in charge of the publications and outreach.

Candidates should possess an established international reputation in the study of modern Islam and Muslim societies, wide-ranging academic contacts, expertise in the field of academic management, and excellent communicative skills.

This Directorship/Professorship is a full-time position, preferably commencing in September 2003. The salary will be commensurate to the candidate's background and qualifications. Female candidates are especially encouraged to apply.

Applicants may wish to consult the ISIM website (www.isim.nl) as well as that of Leiden University (www.leiden.edu).

Review of applications will begin on 15 January 2003.

*Applicants should send a full CV, including a list of publications to: ISIM Search Committee
 P.O. Box 11089
 2301 EB Leiden
 The Netherlands*

*For further inquiries, please contact:
 Prof. Dr Peter van der Veer,
 Chair of the Search Committee
 E-mail: vanderveer@pscw.uva.nl*

Summer Academy

In cooperation with the University of Cape Town the ISIM is organizing a Summer Academy in Cape Town in Autumn 2003 on 'Islam in Public Life in Pluralist Societies'. The Academy will invite experts and students (Ph.D. and post-doctoral) to examine the ways in which Muslims engage in the public sphere through five sub-themes: secularization, law, state, media, and consumption. *Secularization* will be sub-theme through which the general changes in Muslim societies can be examined. A comparative examination of Muslim societies will provide a key to under-

Islam in Public Life in Pluralist Societies

standing the transformation of social and political practices based on Islam. *Law* is pervasive in Muslim societies as a personal code to judicial practice. It is the one common medium to comprehend the preconceptions and expectations of Muslims. Although the *state* seems to sometimes disappear in the new form of globalization, it continues to have far-reaching power and significance. Islam and public life is not restricted to state systems, but the modern nation-state cannot be ignored. The *media* in all forms plays an important role in modern global societies. The employment of

new media in religion provides new possibilities and transformations for Islam in public life in both local and global contexts. Finally, *consumption* defines an often neglected dimension of contemporary public life. Consumption patterns in Muslim contexts may indicate much more than philosophical and political treaties about Islam.

More information the Summer Academy and how to apply will be made available in on the ISIM website in the second half of January 2003.