

Islamic Cities in the Eyes of Europ. Travellers (Prague, 29 Aug–1 Sep 12)

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Deadline: Oct 1, 2011

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DEPICTION AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE "OTHER":

ISLAMIC CITIES IN THE EYES OF EUROPEAN TRAVELERS (Panel S7)

The Renaissance era is often said to be a significant turning point in European history, as a period of cultural and economic reformations that were shaping the identity of the "West." This new identity was based on a revolutionary shift in knowledge about the world in this period. Cultural discovery of the non-Western lands, triggered after the 16th century by European travelers, opened new doors for cultural and economic exchanges. The "discovery" of new territories by the Western-eye transformed the 'mystical' orient into immanent geographies to be visited, explored, recorded, and something to be depicted. The 'voyage to the Orient', once an exceptional adventure, evolved into a habit of the Western intellectual. In the corresponding period of time, the civilizations in Ottoman Turkey, Safavid Persia, and Mughal India were experiencing diverse socio-political and cultural developments. The complex layers of political, economic, and religious struggles, alliances, and rivalries among these empires gradually impacted on the development of cities in this region. The progress in geographic discoveries and the ascending habit of travelling led to inevitable result of the definition of the "other" as opposed to the identification of the "self". Following this construction of the "other" and the creation of "non-Western" cultures, some civilizations were sub-categorized under a homogenizing term, "Islamic" and the cities in these territories were started being defined as the "Muslim city". Distinctions between the Muslim city and the Muslim society against the European city and the European society were sharply defined. Travelers' accounts played a major role in the

split of the world into East and West. This session aims to discuss the West/non-West divergence from a different perspective, which is based on analyzing the travelers' accounts on the "Orient" in the early modern era. We are searching an answer for how the Muslim city was defined and depicted by the Western gaze before the heyday of Orientalism; and proposing to discuss the issues of urban representation before the invention of photography.

The papers of this panel could address the following issues:

1. What tools were used for the depiction of urban fabric and how these depictions were interpreted in the West and also in the East?
2. How "Islamic" cities responded to the developments taking place in Europe in the post-Renaissance era?
3. How was the image of the "Muslim city" literally and symbolically formed and transformed during this period with regard to the cultural and political changes in the Western world?
4. What iconic representations were utilized and how these formulations were transformed within the rapidly changing social, political, and economical context of the period?

The papers can analyze the correspondences and discrepancies between visual depictions and textual accounts and compare various forms of representation of the cities. The papers could initiate new comparisons among European and Muslim cities and encourage new cross-cultural discussions on the underlying factors behind their urban design and development.

Session chairs: Mohammad Gharipour, College of Architecture and Planning, Morgan State University; mohammad@gatech.edu; and Nilay Ozlu, Bogazici University; Department of History; nilay.ozlu@gmail.com.

All abstracts, maximum 500 words, and a short CV should be submitted by October 1, 2011. For more information, please visit the website of the conference on <http://www.eauh2012.com>.

Reference:

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