



## Urban Studies Seminar 2018–2019

### Annual Theme:

### The Urban Spatialities of Religion in the Middle East, Africa and South-East Asia

Monday, 11 February 2019, 5 pm

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### Reconstructing Eastern Christianity under Ottoman Rule: Cairo's Christian Spatialities

Lecture by **Magdi Guirguis** (Kafrelsheikh University, Cairo)

#### Venue

Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient  
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Under the Ottomans, Eastern Christianity was largely restructured. Both its internal organization and relationship with the urban space were the object of profound mutations. The rise of the Greek Patriarch as the dominant ruler of the Chalcedonian communities in the Arab world also deeply influenced the communities. This evolution comprised episodes of strong ethnic, cultural and confessional struggles that also had an urban and spatial dimension. This contribution is an attempt to study such conflicts through the lens of their echoes in the archives of Sharia courts. The focus of this research is to determine where exactly in the urban space, at various scales, conflicts erupted and how conflicts between different Christian communities in Egypt (The monks of Saint Catherine Monastery in the Sinai; the Melkite patriarch of Egypt; and the Melkite patriarch of Jerusalem), affected the general spatiality of a Christian neighborhood of Cairo in the 17th century. In front of Sharia courts, each community claimed certain rights and presented historical narratives to support its point. By analyzing these arguments, the object of the research is to remap the localities of the Christian communities in Cairo after their reorganization at the scale of the whole Ottoman Empire. The aim is also to understand how the central state interacted with local forces in such conflicts and how legal procedures shaped the relationship between communities as well as between communities and the rest of the city and of the Empire.

**Magdi Guirguis** received his PhD from Cairo University. Currently, he is associate professor at Kafrelsheikh University. Guirguis has published widely in Arabic in the field of Coptic History in Ottoman Era, and Islamic law (sharia). Among his publications in English are: *An Armenian Artist in Ottoman Egypt: Yuhanna al-Armani and His Coptic Icons*, AUC Press, 2008; (co-author with Nelly Van doorn-Harder), *The Emergence of the Modern Coptic Papacy*, AUC Press, 2011. He was an EUME Fellow (2006-7) and a Fellow of the Alexander-von-Humboldt-Stiftung (2012-14). Right now he is the Scientific collaborator of IFAO: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, Cairo.