

Heidegger in the Islamicate World

Veranstalter Universität Bern

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International Conference at University of Bern

One of the intellectual traditions profoundly influenced by Heidegger's (1889-1976) thought is the Islamicate world. Intellectuals here started to deal with Heidegger's philosophy as early as the 1940s. Involvement with Heidegger's intellectual oeuvre manifests itself in multiple aspects and at various levels: Besides the rather scholarly interests of reading, translating, and teaching Heidegger's philosophy, his thought is valued as a possible means to recontextualise what thinkers in the Islamicate world define as 'their' intellectual tradition, often including religion, as a meaningful manifestation of a metahistorical dimension of human being. The interest in the work of this particular thinker appears to be grounded in the conviction that the position it takes towards the conventions of intellectual tradition contributes to overcoming the aporias inherent in them. Thus, in the Islamicate world, dealing with Heidegger is often part of a project reaching far beyond the strictly academic sphere. To what extent Heidegger's National Socialism and anti-Semitism play a part in all this is a question deserving scholarly debate.

Among the Arabic scholars, Abdurrahman Badawi (Cairo, 1917-2002) is the first to extensively work and write on Heidegger treating his philosophy within his discussion of various strands of existential philosophy (1945, 1962, 1984). The first scholarly Arabic translation of Heidegger's texts (1964) is also linked to Badawi's name, who encouraged and supervised his pupils Fu'ād Kāmil and Maḥmūd Raḡab in this venture. Arabic reception of Heidegger's philosophy later shifted its core area from Egypt to the Maghreb and holds currently a stronghold in Morocco and Tunisia. Among the more recent contributions by Arabic philosophers we may cite Fethi el-Meskini's (Tunis) first complete Arabic translation of *Time and Being* (2014) and works by Ismail El Mossadeq (Kénitra) (1995, 2003, 2012) and Mohamed Mahjoub (Tunis) (1983, 1995). In Iran, Heideggerianism starts in the early 1950s with the contact of the Iranian philosophy scholar Aḥmad Fardīd

(1913-1994) with the French Orientalist and philosopher Henry Corbin (1903-1978). Corbin applied Heidegger's hermeneutics and phenomenology to what he termed the Iranian-Islamic intellectual tradition in which he sees the manifestation of a timeless wisdom. The Corbinist type of Orientalism still very much defines the perception by many Iranians of 'their' intellectual history. Iranian Heideggerianism features some of the most prominent exponents of intellectual life of the second part of the 20th century such as Dāryūš Šāyegān (1935-) and Reżā Dāvārī (1934-) and fed into the intellectual quest for identity that started in the early 1960s. Similarly, Heidegger's thought has imprinted philosophy in other states and regions within the Islamicate world such as Turkey, Central Asia and Muslim South and Southeast Asia.

Research on the reception of Heidegger in the Islamicate world has first started in Iran, where the role of Heidegger's philosophy in Iranian intellectual history has been reflected as a subject of scholarly discussion since the 1990s on the part of researchers like Boroujerdi (1996), Šādeqī (2000, 2005), Mirsepassi (2000, 2006, 2011) and 'Abdolkarīmī (2013), to mention only a few. Quite contrary is the case of Arabic philosophy, which up to date doesn't involve works dealing with its own reception of Heidegger. Western scholarship on Heidegger reception in the Islamicate world, for its part, has started only recently. Among its contributions are the preliminary articles "La réception arabe de Heidegger" (Kata Moser, 2015) and "To mean or not to mean? as the underlying question of Western-inspired counter-Enlightenment discourse in Iran" (Urs Gösken, 2015).

In order to make a contribution to the ongoing research on Heidegger in the Islamicate world, this conference aspires to bring together researchers from around the world working on Heidegger reception in the Islamicate world as well as recipients of Heidegger within the Islamicate world themselves. The goal of the conference is to deepen, widen and make known to one another the different methodical and thematic outlooks, approaches and perspectives on the topic. In the framework of this goal, the conference attempts to shed light on questions like the following: How and why did Heidegger's thought appear on the intellectual scene of the Islamicate world? What role does it perform there and what are the interests, intellectual, ideological, religious etc. in the light of which thinkers in the Islamicate world deal with this particular philosopher? What are the points in common and the differences between the various parts of the Islamicate world with regard to the reception of Heidegger's thought? What is the particular role Heidegger's philosophy plays in the intellectual life of the Islamicate world in comparison to the philosophy of other thinkers of Western modernity? What is the relationship between Heidegger's thought in the Islamicate world with its previous intellectual tradition? In the light of these and related questions, the conference is designed to encourage reflection on the multiple perspectives of Heidegger's oeuvre and to elucidate the significance of Heidegger's thought for the Islamicate world. We are already able to proudly announce Professor Ali Mirsepassi (New York) as one of the keynote speakers on the topic of our conference.

Call for Papers (until June 30th, 2016)

For more information: Please contact Dr. Kata Moser
(kata.moser(at)islam.unibe(dot)ch) or Dr. Urs Gösken
(urs.goesken(at)islam.unibe(dot)ch)
