
Editorial

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Editorial

Sophie Kessler-Mesguich

- 1 As I pen this first editorial as director of the French Research Center of Jerusalem (CRFJ), I would first of all like to express my delight and pride at assuming this position. The French Research Center of Jerusalem is today a lively hub of multi-disciplinary research in the social sciences (archaeology, history, philosophy, linguistics, musicology, anthropology, study of religion, political science and more). Thanks to collaboration between French and Israeli researchers, it has great potential to develop even further. Since September 2008, I have had the distinct pleasure of working with a dynamic team of engineers, technicians, assigned researchers, visiting teacher-researchers, doctoral and post-doctoral students. I thank them for all of their quality work in their respective disciplines. My gratitude also extends to my predecessor, Pierre de Miroschedji. With his rigor, tenacity and sound judgment that all who have worked with him have come to recognize, he has established and roundly developed during the four years of his mandate, an ambitious scientific program for the CRFJ, while maintaining it as an integral part of the international network of French Research Centers.
- 2 The unique French presence in Jerusalem is one rooted in history. The complexity of France's administrative and diplomatic presence in the city is a reflection of the ever-present tension marked by Jerusalem's beautiful historical sites and diverse populace. I hope that those who come to work at the CRFJ in future will continue to appreciate this complexity, particularly in relatively unexplored domains like comparative literature, cinema, economics, education, the cognitive sciences and others.
- 3 I can appreciate that in the current climate, when the state must tighten its purse strings, the operation of a center like the CRFJ constitutes a significant effort for our CNRS and MAEE patrons. During this difficult situation, which is being felt throughout the world, it is up to us to convince them that such an effort is necessary. The assistance provided by our patrons enables continued cooperation with researchers in a country whose scientific prowess is almost unrivalled. This activity is essential to developing French influence and language. Ongoing exchanges with our Israeli colleagues demonstrate the importance of such a dialogue and its utility. In this vein, I would like to thank France's Ambassador to

Israel, Mr. Jean-Michel Casa as well as Cultural and Cooperation Counselor Mr. Tobie Nathan for their welcome and support. I would also like to thank the SCAC in Tel Aviv for its services. Current budgetary restrictions do not bode well for grants earmarked for doctoral and post-doctoral researchers. Because I attach such great importance to our educational mission, beginning this year, I have taken it upon myself to secure outside sources of funding by means of cultural sponsorship.

- 4 I am committed to ensuring that our work becomes better known, both among specialists as well as the general public. Our public activities have proven highly popular, indicating a need for further developing them. Our monthly conferences are always a success. The start of a new course on Israeli history (eight three-hour sessions) has in short order drawn to the Center a regular, and entirely new, clientele. Courses on Islam, the history of the Hebrew language as well as others are being planned for the coming months. We continue to organize seminars that allow researchers to both present their findings and facilitate collaboration with Israeli partners, something which is so necessary to scientific inquiry. Such seminars typically lead into CRFJ-organized workshops or symposia in cooperation with Israeli universities and research institutions.
- 5 With reference to our publications, in 2008, CNRS Éditions produced a new, four-volume spread consisting of a two-tome work by D. Trimbur and R. Aaronsohn (*De Bonaparte à Balfour, la France, l'Europe occidentale et la Palestine, 1799-1917*¹, 2001 edition reprint and *De Balfour à Ben-Gourion, les puissances européennes et la Palestine, 1917-1948*²). It also features a case study by J-M. Joubert devoted to Yeshayahu Leibowitz (*Leibowitz, une pensée de la religion*³) and *De la mémoire de la Shoah dans le monde juif*⁴ by F. Ouzan and D. Michman. Other publications are in the works for 2009 both by CNRS Éditions as well as de Boccard – the latter in the form of an entirely new collection entitled *Archéologie et sciences de l'Antiquité : mémoires et travaux*⁵.
- 6 Finally, we continue to publish our online *Bulletin*, a bilingual, annual update reflecting the diversity of work by CRFJ-associated and sponsored researchers. *Bulletin* is put on the Internet by Marjolaine Barazani whom I thank for her contribution to increasing the visibility and value of CRFJ research. Also to be found on our website, www.crfj.org, is detailed information regarding researchers, Center activities and publications.
- 7 Scientific rigor, ongoing development and increased visibility of the CRFJ: these are the objectives to which I will dedicate all of my energies for the duration of my term in Jerusalem.

NOTES

1. Bonaparte to Balfour : France, Western Europe and Palestine 1799-1917
2. Balfour to Ben Gurion : European Powers and Palestine 1917-1948
3. Leibowitz : Thoughts on Religion
4. Memory of the Holocaust in the Jewish World
5. Archaeology and Science in Antiquity : dissertations and research

AUTHOR

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