

**PhD workshop**  
**EHESS-CETOBaC / EPHE-GSRL**

**Subject:**

**“Unthought perspectives in the study of Turkish Islam: methodology and research prospects”**

**Call for communications:**

This workshop invites Master, PhD students and postdoctoral researchers who share a common object of study (i.e, the various aspects of Turkish Islam), to consider what remains unthought in their research projects.

Studying what is unthought of involves studying what has yet to be clarified, that is, the gray areas of the research that has been conducted hitherto. It is those grey areas we call on to investigate and uncover, i.e. peripheral, marginal or neglected topics. This is also an invitation to question the hierarchies and priorities we set in our research agendas and explore the impact of events, at times unprecedented and unexpected as well as the effects of ongoing social and technological changes that open up new fields of research.

When we say “unthought”, we also refer to paradigmatic, traditional or conventional approaches that structure academic debates around the study of Turkish Islam. Turkish Islam remains widely considered in terms of mutually exclusive categories, whether they be Western or Eastern, religious or secular, orthodox or unorthodox, scholarly or folk Islam, Sunni or Alevi. Those distinctions permeate the terminology of researchers, both Turkish and non-Turkish as well as that of writers, journalists and especially that of religious and political actors, which blurs the boundaries between *emic* and *etic*.

Thus, we ought to consider Turkish Islam “in the making”, that is, to study the way in which these analytical and practical categories are constructed and observed both on the field and in discourses. Some questions remain, such as which phenomena are unintelligible in light of these alternative concepts? In terms of our respective fields and subjects, what should we make of them and how should we employ those alternative concepts? This notion of unthought perspectives challenges those concepts by shedding light on complex subjects that elude the usual frameworks.

Moreover, this quest for the “unthought” is a way to deal with the issue of the “unthinkable”, of what cannot be grasped nor understood by thought processes, i.e. the unsolvable aspects of the unspeakable, the taboo, the rejected and the repressed. All of which can be observed in identity politics, logics of social integration and exclusion of otherness, the role played by religious authorities as well as in the burden of language and its social meanings. “Unthought perspectives” can also refer to the unconscious or ineffable role that is played by emotions, perceptions, memories and the way in which they are expressed.

Finally, unthought perspectives lead us on a journey that transcends the boundaries of academic research. This notion can also refer to the risks posed by ethnocentrism or anachronism, as well as the excessive use of supposedly universal categories, such as “religion.” The notion of “unthought perspectives” also sheds light on the practical matters of the doable and the undoable for the researcher on the field, in terms of access or relationship opportunities – due to security or gender issues, for instance.

### **Contact and proposal submissions**

We invite participants to come and share their research experience, methods, hypothesis and results – whether they have been completed or remain in progress. We would like to allow for young researchers to discuss their new fields and the ways in which they have been studying them. Though this workshop is organized by the Center for Turkish, Ottoman, Balkan, and Central Asian Studies (CETOBaC) and the Religion, Society and Secularism Group (GSRL), any

student from France and beyond can partake in it. The participants in need of accommodation and transportation are kindly asked to request their own institution; in some specific and justified cases, the organizers will be able to take charge of them.

Those researchers who wish to participate should send a proposal of roughly 500 words including a presentation of their academic background (level of study, field, institution, name of their director), a short presentation of their ongoing research (thesis or PhD), and the subject of their presentation for the workshop. The proposals should be sent to the following email addresses: [verleysamuel@gmail.com](mailto:verleysamuel@gmail.com) and [teoman.malcok@gmail.com](mailto:teoman.malcok@gmail.com) prior to February 28th 2021.

**Organizers:**

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