

Monday, 30.05.2022; 4:15 - 6:00 pm CEST

Chouki El Hamel, Arizona State University:

Slavery, memory and the archival silence in Islamic societies

Abstract:

This presentation explains how the archives created a wall of silence regarding issues of slavery and race. The archival silence created an intentional gap in the production of history. My previous book *Black Morocco* was an attempt to place slavery and black Moroccans in the national narrative. It highlighted the black Moroccan heritage in the collective cultural memories. My current project focuses on the agency and resistance of black Moroccans and the insistence of their freedom. I focus on retrieving the archives for historical reparative justice. I intend to bring to light the forces that created maroonage and maintained social and legal identities in Morocco. I will thus examine the historical roots of this marginalized group that led to the present dilemma of racial identity and discrimination in Morocco.

Bio:

Chouki El Hamel is a professor of history in the School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies at Arizona State University, specializing in West and Northwest Africa. His training and doctoral studies were at the University of Sorbonne (Paris I & VII, France). He taught courses in African history at Duke University in Durham, N.C. He was a scholar in residence at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City. In the year 2017, he was awarded a Fulbright grant for research in Morocco. His research interests focus on the spread and the growth of Islamic culture and the evolution of Islamic institutions in Africa. He is particularly interested in the subaltern relationship of servile and marginalized communities to Islamic ruling institutions. His research into these relationships revolves around issues of slavery, race/ethnicity/color, gender, power/class, and restorative justice. He published two books and many scholarly articles in academic journals and popular magazines. His interviews, commentaries and essays have appeared in international venues such as the French newspaper *Le Monde*, the German magazine *Bilatéral*, the Moroccan magazines *Zamane* and *TelQuel*, and *Jadaliyya* (produced by the Arab Studies Institute in the US). His most recent book is *Black Morocco: A History of Slavery, Race, and Islam* (Cambridge University Press, 2013). This book was translated into French in 2019. He is now working on a new book project entitled "The Hidden Story of Maroons in Morocco".