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Internationale Gesellschaft für Schulbuch-
und Bildungsmedienforschung e.V.
International Society for Research on
Textbooks and Educational Media e.V.

Laudation

on the Occasion of the Award of the Arsen Djurović Special Prize for Historical Research on Educational Media to Dr. Iris Seri-Hersch

Dr. Iris Seri-Hersch is Assistant Professor at the Department of Middle East Studies at the Aix-Marseille Université in Aix-en-Provence, France, and at present its director. From 2012 to 2014 she had a post-doctorate scholarship from the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). As historian of modern Sudan and Palestine/Israel, one of her main interests of research lies on the history of education and especially History didactics under colonial and post-colonial conditions, with a focus on educational challenges and the need of new educational media in the phase of transformation from the colonial to the post-colonial status. Besides several articles referring to the development of teaching materials, textbooks, other didactical materials, with a focus on History teaching, she published a comprehensive depiction of History teaching in the times of colonial dismantlement in Sudan: *Enseigner l'histoire à l'heure de l'ébranlement colonial. Soudan, Égypte, empire britannique (1943-1960)* [History Teaching in the Era of Colonial Dismantlement: Sudan, Egypt and the British Empire (1943–1960)], which was published at the "Institut d'études de l'Islam et des sociétés du monde musulman" [Institute for Islam Studies and Muslim Societies of the World] in Paris.

For this publication, the International Society for Research on Textbooks and Educational Media e.V. (IGSBI) awards to Dr. Iris Seri-Hersch an Arsen Djurović Special Prize for Historical Research on Educational Media.

The study deals with the transition period of Anglo-Egypt Sudan after 1946; until then the country, which had been divided into two separate regions for a quarter of a century, was reconstituted as one administrative, political and educational unit. While the Egypt-oriented

“Unionists” tried to steer towards a union with Egypt, Great Britain favored a moderate transfer to Sudanese “independence” for political reasons and worked fiercely with Sudanese officials and educators to develop an appropriate educational system, new pedagogical practices and historical narratives, which focused on the independence from Egypt; therefore they produced last but not least manuals for teachers, new textbooks, and diverse materials like maps, models, etc.

For the following reasons, the jury regards the submitted publication as praiseworthy:

First, Mrs. Seri-Hersch breaks new ground in a field of research, which has widely been neglected so far: the role of education and teaching with regard to a country’s transfer from a colonial to an independent status, while still under the influence of the imperial power and its worldviews; a focus of the study lies on the requirement to create new educational media (or to use old ones, hardly fitting the local political and cultural needs).

Second, as part of this study, Mrs. Seri-Hersch thoroughly reconstructs the development of manuals for History teachers in primary and secondary schools. She examines the various forms of collaboration in the production-process of these manuals, identifying “big players” and minor ones, inter alia by using remarkable amounts of archive files, of private correspondence, and of relevant literature, which she all can read in the original language. Thus, she elucidates the production process of pedagogically, didactically and politically very influential educational media.

This leads to the third reason – the elaboration of the lasting political consequences of the historical narratives, which were established in these educational media for teachers and students. Mrs. Seri-Hersch’s study sensitizes for the role of school history and its educational media in fueling political conflicts, in this case the still ongoing conflict between Southern and Northern Sudan.

We express our warm congratulations to Dr. Iris Seri-Hersch for her innovative achievements in the field of historical research on educational media and the therefore bestowed Arsen Djurović Special Prize!