



Alexandria (Egypt) 2008, ©Michèle Baussant

## Invitation

# Preserving Cultural Heritage *in situ*, Keeping the Memory of Loss Alive: The Jews of Egypt

**Dr. Michèle Baussant**  
(CNRS Paris)

Wednesday, May, 29<sup>th</sup> | 10:00 AM

Library of the CJS | Beethovenstraße 21 | A-8010 Graz

# Preserving Cultural Heritage *in situ*, Keeping the Memory of Loss Alive: The Jews of Egypt

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The lecture deals with the issue of cultural heritage of Jews from Egypt. Today reduced to a handful of individuals in Alexandria and Cairo, this community is now considered by those outside the country to be an “inverted” diaspora (Trier 1996), which makes Egypt their cultural “home-land” and works to reaffirm a collective Egyptian Jewish history and identity, by promoting their specific cultural and religious heritage. This ‘patrimonialization’ made it possible to affirm, as an *asli masri* (native of Egypt), a link to that country through the material traces it had left, as a land filled with collective ancestry and heritage. The talk explores this movement of ‘patrimonialization’ driven by various actors, who promoted buildings and religious artefacts as ‘living traces’ of a past that was no longer associated with current practices and a social group in Egypt. In particular, the convergences and contradictions with issues of tourism, memory, politics, and history will be examined.

**Dr. Michèle Baussant** is Tenured Senior Research Fellow of Anthropology, CNRS (French National Centre for Scientific Research) Paris and a member of the ISP. She has published extensively on the issues of migrations, memory and cultural heritage and coordinated and overseen four national and international research programs around migrations and memory. Among her latest publications: Baussant, Michèle, Chau-liac, Marina, Gensburger Sarah et Venel Nancy (eds.), *Ethnographie de la mémoire. De Villeurbanne à Valparaiso Territoires, terrains et échelles d'observation*, Nanterre, Presses de l'Université de Paris Ouest, 2018; Basset Karine, Baussant, Michèle (eds.), *Utopies, nostalgies : approches croisées*, *Revue Conserveries mémorielles*, 2018; Baussant Michèle, Foscarini Giorgia (eds.), *Memories at stake: Sharing stories and exchanging experiences*, *Revue Ethnologies*, 2018.

The lecture takes place within the framework of the research focus Cultural and Interpretation History of Europe and the research project „Europe’s (In) Visible Jewish Migrants“ funded by FWF.

Concept and organisation: Piera Rossetto



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