



MEDITERRANEAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

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Abstracts

All times listed are Central European Time (local Thessaloniki time)

Wednesday, May 27, 2026

Session 1: 9:15 - 11:15 am

1A. Body and Soul in Mediterranean Literature and Philosophy

Chair: David A. Escobar Arcay, Palm Beach Atlantic University

Yosef. Z. (Yossie) Liebersohn, Bar-Ilan University, “Τὸ κατ’ ἐνδείαν ἀλγοῦν and the Epicurean καταστηματικὴ ἡδονή.” **(VIRTUAL)**

Abstract: Epicurean pleasures are commonly split into 'kinetic' (active) and 'katastematic' (static), but there's also the basic division between body and soul. Epicurus is thus expected to classify both types accordingly. Diogenes Laertius (10.136) tells us that ataraxia (tranquility) and aponia (absence of bodily pain) are katastematic pleasures. But what exactly distinguishes ataraxia as a soul-related pleasure from aponia as bodily? Many have tried to define these terms, emphasizing their role in removing pain. This presentation proposes a clearer axis: the phrase τὸ κατ’ ἐνδείαν ἀλγοῦν (“pain due to want”). Necessary pleasures relieve pain, but this pain may stem from lack (e.g., hunger) or from false belief (e.g., fear of divine punishment). The former concerns the body; the latter, the soul. In both, pain is removed—but by different means: filling a lack vs. correcting error.

David A. Escobar Arcay, Palm Beach Atlantic University, “Unamuno’s ‘Man of Flesh and Bone’: Belonging and Bildung within the Mediterranean Intellectual Tradition.”

Abstracts: This paper explores Miguel Unamuno’s concept of ‘el hombre de carne y de hueso’ as a philosophical vision of belonging. Based on my master’s thesis on agonistic Bildung in Unamuno’s thought, this paper examines selected passages on Unamuno’s *The Tragic Sense of Life* and identifies various dimensions of belonging: embodiment, unity, memory, and participation. I

argue that Unamuno's vision of belonging reflects a distinctive Mediterranean sensibility in which human formation (*Bildung*) emerges through the existential tension of lived experience. Locating Unamuno's concept of 'el hombre de carne y de hueso' within recent and contemporary research on *Bildung* and place, this paper demonstrates and suggests the positive contributions of Spanish existential philosophy to Mediterranean intellectual traditions concerned with the formation of the human subject within community and history.

Stelios Panayotakis, University of Crete, "No Strings Attached: Bodies and Popular Culture in Petronius' Satyricon."

Abstracts: Petronius' *Satyricon*, a Latin fictional narrative populated by low-life and lustful characters, is dominated by imagery in which the human body—especially the male body—sexually malfunctions, is mutilated, or dismembered. This emphasis on the loss of physical integrity has been interpreted in relation to the aesthetics of deformity characteristic of Neronian literature, as well as to questions of cohesion and human identity in Stoic philosophy. Other readings of this pervasive motif focus on the body as a metaphor for literary composition and describe literary creation in anatomical terms.

In this paper, I explore the spectrum between the intact body and the dismembered body in the imagery of the *Satyricon* and argue that Petronius may be drawing analogies between the human body and objects of theatrical art or entertainment in the Roman world, such as puppets or articulated dolls. By their very construction, these objects raise questions about the relationship between bodily parts and the body as a whole, about the connection and disconnection of parts within a unified form, and about the animating force that brings them to life. These questions are especially significant when considered alongside the complex narrative technique, literary texture, and compositional strategies of Petronius' work.

Matthew Ancell, Brigham Young University, "Violent Hippogiff: Classical Reason and Doubt in La Vida Es Sueño."

Abstracts: Because of the radical doubt expressed by Segismundo in *La vida es sueño*, as well as the proximity of the publication of the two texts, many critics have made comparisons of *La vida es sueño* to Descartes' *Discourse on Method* published only a year later in 1637. Relatively recent scholarship, in an effort to begin to correct the assumption that modern philosophy never crossed the Pyrenees, examines the play from epistemological and metaphysical perspectives, but in the process, asserts that Segismundo resembles the modern subject in the mode of Descartes's *cogito*. While it is indeed tempting to try to make correspondences between Calderón and Descartes, I agree with Ciriaco Morón Arroyo, who advises that it is best to forget about Cartesian thought altogether when talking about Calderón's philosophy. Instead of anachronistically marching forward into the Enlightenment to engage with doubt, Calderón's play inhabits pre-Platonic realm, even as it acknowledges it, as it attempts to navigate the labyrinth of the tragic world, an oracular and enigmatic epistemology enmeshed with Catholic Reformation theology.

1B. Classical and Modern Perspectives in Mediterranean Literature

Chair: Ksenia Bonch Reeves, Wright State University

**Ichrak Ben Hammouda, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle / Université de la Manouba,
“Entangled Modernities in Maghreb Literature: A Mediterranean Perspective.”**

(VIRTUAL)

Abstracts: This paper proposes to examine Maghreb literature written since Independence through the concept of entangled modernities as defined by Shalini Randeria and Göran Therborn. Situated at the intersection of Shmuel Eisenstadt’s theory of multiple modernities and Abdelkébir Khatibi’s concept of *pensée-autre*, this paper argues that Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco displays different approaches to – and modalities of – modernity that can be analysed through literary productions in the three countries. Despite their significant differences, the Maghreb countries illustrate the way the independent nations connect with the international modern context with and beyond the colonial legacy: Tunisia through Bourguiba’s reformism and the young republic’s constitutionalism, Algeria through the postcolonial rupture after the traumatic war of independence, and Morocco through a negotiation between its monarchical tradition and modern nationalism. Together, the three countries form a polyphonic space where modernity cannot be reduced to an extension of its Western representations. At the same time, the Maghreb doesn’t follow an exclusive Arab nationalist perspective, neither, since the region’s identity is constituted by layered and entangled historical formations that exceed and predate Arabization.

This entanglement standpoint might partially be explained through the specific Mediterranean perspective of the Maghreb region in comparison with other Arab countries. If Markus Messling and Frank Hofmann define the Mediterranean as an “empty center,” a semiotic space open to interpretation with unstable references, we argue that literature can fill this blank centre, and it fills it by bringing references from the South and the North of the Mediterranean all together and by connecting them through the concept of modernity. Situated in the “bi-langue” space named by Khatibi and defined by its intrinsic multiplicity the researcher names in his *Maghreb pluriel*, Maghreb literary experiences draw together references from both shores of the Mediterranean rather than singular nationalist narratives. By bringing together comparative literature, postcolonial theory, and a Mediterranean studies perspective through the analysis of literary works from Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, this paper argues that the writers of the Maghreb region do not simply reflect or resist to a modernity imported from the North but actively theorize and remake it with their life experiences and specific historical and linguistic situations. Such a pluricentric focus on Maghreb modernity demonstrates that the Mediterranean approached from its southern shores, is not a peripheral space of exception but a constitutive site of global modernity.

Susan O. Shapiro, Utah State University, “Nēpioi! Fools and Foolish Actions in the Odyssey.”

Abstracts: Fools and foolish actions play an important role in the *Odyssey*, although there has been little scholarly discussion of this theme. At the beginning of the epic (Book 1, lines 7-9) the poet-narrator calls Odysseus' crew *nēpioi* (fools), explaining that, because they ate the sacred cattle of the Sun, they were destroyed "through their own folly" (*σφετέρησιν ἀτασθαλίησιν*). Only a few lines later (lines 34-42), Zeus, speaking to the other gods, uses Aegisthus' recent

death at the hands of Orestes as a prime example of how men often create problems for themselves "through their own folly" (σφῆσιν ἀτασθαλίησιν). Aegisthus had killed Orestes' father, Agamemnon, despite being warned by the gods not to do so. These repeated phrases and repeating patterns of behavior signal that self-destruction through folly will be an important theme in the epic.

In the first part of this presentation, I will discuss three key words related to this theme: νῆπιοι or nēpioi (fools), ἀτασθάλιαι (foolishness as recklessness), and ἀφραδίη (foolishness as lack of perception). I will then discuss three prominent examples of fools in the Odyssey (Aegisthus, Penelope's suitors, and Odysseus' crew) and consider to what extent their downfalls were due to their own foolishness. Finally, I will discuss Odysseus' behavior in the Cyclops' cave and ask whether Odysseus, too, should be considered a fool.

Vaios Vaiopoulos, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. "Observations on the Translation of Ovid's *Remedia Amoris* Comprised in the *Ovidiana Graeca* (14th century)."

Abstracts: *Ovidiana Graeca* is a collection of Greek translations of excerpts from *Ars amatoria*, *Amores*, and *Remedia amoris* in prose. This paper investigates the translation practice of the medieval translator of the *Remedia*. It focuses primarily on the translator's textual choices—specifically, what he selected from the Latin text to present and translate into Greek. Of particular interest, however, is what he omitted from the Latin original. Subsequently, the study examines the manner in which the Byzantine translator approaches the translation of the selected passages, the fidelity of the translation, and instances of deviation from a word-for-word rendering, proposing possible explanations where such deviations are identified.

Scheyma Djaziri, Université Paris, "The EEZ in the Central Mediterranean: Rethinking Maritime Governance under UNCLOS." (VIRTUAL)

Abstracts: The Central Mediterranean is legally defined as a semi-enclosed sea under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), a status that presupposes enhanced cooperation among coastal States. Yet, the progressive establishment of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) in this region has generated overlapping claims, protracted delimitation processes, and intensified geopolitical tensions among Italy, Tunisia, Malta, and Libya.

This paper argues that, in the Central Mediterranean, the EEZ regime functions not only as a framework for resource allocation but also as a structural driver reshaping regional maritime governance. Drawing on recent state practice across both northern and southern shores, it examines how global legal norms are adapted, contested, and instrumentalized within a politically fragmented and geographically constrained space.

By reassessing the interaction between UNCLOS and Central Mediterranean dynamics, the paper contributes to broader debates on the adaptability of international law of the sea in semi-enclosed seas and contemporary regional governance frameworks.

1C. Mediterranean Arts and Their Influence

Chair: Daniel Guernsey, Florida International University

Andrew Elfenbein, University of Minnesota, "Burne-Jones and the Displaced Mediterranean."

Abstracts: A Sea Nymph (1881) by Edward Burne-Jones revises one of European art's most enduring images of the Mediterranean, Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus*. Most obviously, the hair of the central figure is similar in both paintings and departs from the controlled, decorous hair that had become a conventional metonymy for the respectable woman. Yet both also float on the water in ways that defy physics and both feature female figures with pointedly ambiguous or enigmatic expressions. This paper will examine Burne-Jones's revision of Botticelli in the context of the Victorian reception of Botticelli. Burne-Jones uses spatial immediacy instead of narrativity and breaks the conventional frame to convey the mermaid's heightened presence. The paper will also explore how the mermaid's tail also unsettles her whiteness insofar as it positions her between animal and human, as well as between European and non-European cultures in its similarity to a grass skirt.

Graziana Adorno, Università di Catania, "Naturalistic Tendencies in the Messina Collection of Antonio Ruffo."

Abstracts: The Ruffo Gallery represents one of the most significant cases of art collecting in seventeenth-century Southern Italy. Despite its peripheral geographical position in relation to the major cultural centers of the peninsula, it became integrated into a European cultural network, described by Francis Haskell as a "citadel of European culture." The Ruffo collection came to include hundreds of paintings, selected through an extensive network of intermediaries and sustained by direct correspondence with artists. The epistolary documentation, published by Vincenzo Ruffo in 1916, reveals the figure of a discerning collector who was fully aware of and responsive to contemporary artistic developments. The aim of the present study is to examine, within the earliest nucleus of the collection, the particular attention devoted to Caravaggesque naturalism. This orientation is evidenced by the presence of works by Jusepe de Ribera, Mattia Preti, Rodriguez, Artemisia Gentileschi, and Matthias Stom. Within this framework, special consideration is given to the documented desire to acquire "qualche pezetto" by Caravaggio, a lacuna perceived as significant within a collection that could already claim a substantial Caravaggesque core.

Daniel Guernsey, Florida International University, "From Scripture to Sculpture: Winckelmann, the Higher Criticism, and the Historicization of Greek Art."

Abstracts: This paper examines how J. J. Winckelmann revolutionized the evaluation of ancient art by adapting the "higher criticism"—a historical-critical method of biblical exegesis he encountered at the University of Halle—to Greek art. While scholars credit Winckelmann with founding modern art history, his methodological debt to 18th-century Protestant exegesis remains underappreciated. By repurposing this method, which treats texts as historically situated artifacts, Winckelmann challenged ahistorical views of antiquity. Influenced by Halle's rationalism and polymaths like Johann Schulz, he reframed Greek art as an anthropological, evolutionary narrative. Winckelmann rejected Charles Le Brun's timeless classicism, arguing that artistic form emerged from climatic, political, and religious conditions. This contextual evaluation replaced static approaches with a systematic, organic evolution, tracing stylistic progression from stiff archaic works to graceful classical ones. Ultimately, by positioning art as a physical

manifestation of cultural circumstance, Winckelmann laid the groundwork for art history as a rigorous academic science.

Maria-João Marçalo, University of Évora, “A Multimodal Discursive Analysis of Religious Material Culture: Portuguese Ex-votos.”

Abstracts: This article examines votive offerings (ex-votos) in the Alentejo region (Portugal) as multimodal discursive artefacts that articulate lived experience, religious belief, and social meaning. Drawing on a pilot corpus collected from major sanctuaries and rural chapels, the study integrates Critical Discourse Analysis and multimodal theory to investigate how these artefacts encode narratives of crisis, divine intervention, and resolution. The findings reveal a stable but elliptical narrative structure, a high degree of discursive formulaicity, and a diachronic shift from pictorial representation to indexical forms such as photographs and objects. The study argues that ex-votos function as interfaces between visual and oral memory, transforming private experience into publicly shared symbolic resources. By combining linguistic, visual, and material analysis, this research contributes to the study of multimodal discourse and material religion, highlighting the analytical potential of ex-votos within interdisciplinary frameworks.

1D. Cultural Impacts in the Mediterranean

Chair: Carolin Aronis, Colorado State University

Carla Ferreira de Castro, University of Évora, “The Poetics of Wine in Portuguese Literature.”

Abstracts: This article aims to explore the poetics of wine in Portuguese literature, focusing on the symbolic, cultural, and aesthetic roles attributed to wine across different authors and literary periods. Wine frequently appears not merely as a material element of daily life but as a complex metaphor that articulates themes of conviviality, memory, inspiration, and existential reflection. Particular attention is given to the work of Fernando Pessoa, who’s writing often mobilises wine as a sign of introspection, sensory awareness, and philosophical detachment. By situating Pessoa alongside other Portuguese writers, the study examines how wine functions as a literary motif that bridges the intimate and the collective, the bodily and the spiritual. Through close reading and contextual analysis, the article argues that wine contributes to a broader poetic discourse in which landscape, culture, and identity are intertwined. Ultimately, the poetics of wine reveals how a familiar cultural object becomes a vehicle for exploring Portuguese sensibility, imagination, and literary expression.

Joseph Agee, Morehouse College, “A Spanish Humanist on Technology and Culture.”

Abstracts: The Spanish philosopher, Ortega y Gasset (1884-1954), wrote extensively about technology, noting that "without it humankind would never have existed". He believed this amazing phenomenon made it possible for the earliest humans, whom he called "fantastic animals", to develop a rich interior world, accounting for the thinking process that created sophisticated cultures, civilizations and technological progress throughout history. However, by 1933, Ortega began speaking about the problem of either being seduced or overwhelmed by the

sheer power of advancing technology. This approach is all the more relevant with AI having reached such a radical level that it threatens to upend the traditional nature of thinking and even the concept of being human. As a humanist embedded in the tradition of Spanish realism, he warned about the extravagant claims made by proponents of technology that it could not only solve the mysteries of human nature but automatically lead to the perfection of society and its ability to think as a natural development of human evolution. My paper attempts to show how Ortega was far ahead of his time in predicting the impact of technology. I will concentrate on three key works: "What is Technology?" (1933), "Meditations on Technology" (1933) and "The Myth of Man Beyond Technology" (1952).

Fernando Gomes, and Ana Alexandra Silva, University of Évora, "Greece as a Vital Experience in American Literature: Henry Miller and the Rejection of Classical Idealism."

Abstracts: This article examines the representation of Greece in American literature through a close reading of *The Colossus of Maroussi* (1941) by Henry Miller. It argues that Miller radically departs from the intellectualized and idealized reception of Greece dominant in American letters by presenting Greece as a vital, sensorial, and anti-modern mode of existence. Drawing on theoretical perspectives from Nietzsche, Eliade, and Vernant, and through comparison with other American engagements with Greece, the article demonstrates how Miller transforms Greece from a classical heritage into an existential alternative to modern Western civilization. A lexical-semantic analysis of both landscape and people shows how Miller's language actively constructs Greece and the Greeks as embodiments of a non-modern ontology.

Eli Alshech, Bar Ilan University, "Preserving Communal Purity through Emotional Regulations: Salafi-Jihadi Constructions of Piety via the Doctrine of al-Walā' wa-l-Barā'."

Abstracts: This study examines how Salafi-jihadi jurists regulate adherents' emotions, intentions, and behaviors to preserve communal purity through al-walā' wa-l-barā' (loyalty and disavowal). Analyzing juridical rulings (2009-2015), the research demonstrates that Salafi-jihadi legal discourse prescribes internal emotional states as legally determinative of Muslim identity, mandating active hostility toward non-Muslims and perceived apostates. When adherents must unavoidably engage with "apostate" state institutions, jurists conditionally permit such interactions but require specific emotional dispositions—particularly hatred and contempt—as safeguards against spiritual contamination. This emotional regulation functions juridically: proper intention coupled with prescribed animosity prevents forbidden association with unbelief, while their absence constitutes transgression regardless of external circumstances. By legislating emotions, Salafi-jihadi jurists transform affective experience into enforceable religious obligation, making hatred cultivation a legally mandated boundary between unavoidable exposure and forbidden internalization of apostate influence.

Coffee Break: 11:15 - 11:30

Session 2: 11:30 - 13:30

2A. Ancient Greek Theatre

Chair: Poulheria Kyriakou, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Poulheria Kyriakou, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, “Experienced in Disaster: The Sophoclean Eurydice and Deianeira.”

Abstract: Eurydice in Sophocles’ *Antigone* appears very late in the play and completely unexpectedly. Before she commits suicide, she curses her husband Creon, accusing him of being responsible for the death of Haemon and their elder son Megareus. The latter had also not been mentioned before, and no character corroborates Eurydice’s claims, which add a nucleus of ambiguity about Creon’s past. The primary function of Eurydice’s appearance and her suicide following the report of Haemon’s end seems to be the portrayal of the destabilization of a decent character and the breaking of all family ties. Like Deianeira in *Women of Trachis*, Eurydice is a mature woman whose experience in disaster is supposed to arm her with self-restraint. The latest family crisis plunges both characters into blinding despair and skews their judgment of the past. Lack of prudence infects all members of the afflicted families, united in errors and misery across generations.

Ioanna Karamanou, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, “Tragedy Subverted: Euripides in Diphilan Comedy.”

Abstract: This paper sets out to investigate the appropriation of Euripidean quotations by demimonde characters, such as parasites and courtesans, in the comedy of Diphilus. To corroborate their case, these characters tend to appeal to Euripidean sayings as pieces of traditional wisdom. On the basis of a close reading of fr. 60 (*Parasitos*) and 74 (*Synoris*), it is argued that in each case the comic effect emerges from the incongruity between the authority of the tragic quotation and the laughable situation in which these characters find themselves (e.g. the parasite's bathetic agony to fulfill the needs of his belly in fr. 60 or the courtesan's desire to win a dice-game in fr. 74). This case study may also yield insight into the ways in which Diphilus employs verbal humour (wordplays, puns, unexpected jokes) to generate comic effect; unlike Menander, who employs Euripidean quotations to stress tragic authority in situations crucial for the development of his plots, Diphilus - following the tradition of middle comedy - relies on the incongruity between the tragic saying and the comic situation to raise a laugh.

Anna Lamari, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, “Comedy’s New Women: Hetairai in the Transition from Middle to New Comedy.”

Abstract: This article investigates the evolution of women’s representation in Greek comedy, with a particular focus on the transformation of the hetaira from Middle to New Comedy. While Old Comedy satirized women as disruptive political figures, Middle Comedy shifted toward domestic and character-driven narratives, where the hetaira emerged as a dominant type. Far from being portrayed merely as mercenary figures, hetairai in Antiphanes, Amphis, Ephippus, and Anaxilas often appear as loyal companions, witty interlocutors, or paradoxical objects of

encomium, embodying both admirable and dangerous qualities. These portrayals reflect not only the cultural fascination with courtesans in fourth-century Athens but also the genre's broader reorientation from civic invective to private and social concerns. Menander and Diphilus subsequently developed this tradition, granting courtesans central narrative roles and psychological depth, transforming them into sympathetic heroines whose agency and moral complexity underpin the domestic resolutions of Hellenistic comedy. The hetaira thus became the emblematic female figure of the comic stage's new era.

Commentator: Ioanna Karamanou, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

2B. Crossing Boundaries and Borders in Film and Cinema

Chair: Vincenzo Selleri, Farmingdale State College

Vincenzo Selleri, Farmingdale State College, "The Immortal Bias: Americanism, Racial Anxiety and the New Italian Identity in Riccardo Freda's *Caltiki il Mostro Immortale* (1959)."

Abstracts: Notions of an exotic Mezzogiorno have animated the Italian political debate since the unification wars of the 19th century and have been crucial in the definition of *italianità*. The making of an Italian national identity has been a process of constant negotiations in which Italians defined themselves through a negative process of othering. The ideal citizen was defined against the primitive Mezzogiorno against African colonial subjects, the Jewish domestic population, and against the bodies of migrants who have been reshaping the demographics of the country. This paper traces the 'orientalization' of the south in popular culture by analyzing Riccardo Freda's 1959 film *Caltiki il mostro immortale*. This paper suggests that American films provided Italian filmmakers with a foreign framework to construct alterity. Cinema reinforced the idea that Italians were a white nation, and that black bodies, the exotic south, and the criminal man existed outside the borders of the imagined national community.

Christina Karageorgou-Bastea, Vanderbilt University, "Miseries of Self and Other in Nikos Kavvadias and Jaime Gil de Biedma Prose."

Abstracts: In his novella entitled *Λι* (1987, *Li*) Nikos Kavvadias offers a glimpse into the life of a ten-year-old Chinese girl in extreme poverty, from the perspective of his alter ego, a radio operator, stranded in the area of Hong Kong. Gil de Biedma writes *Retrato del artista en 1956* (1974, *Portrait of the Artist in 1956*), in which he interlaces the journal of his experience in The Philippines, as a young executive of his family's company, with the commercial report he prepares for this firm, and an account of his recovery from tuberculosis upon his return to Francoist Spain. Kavvadias's text was the basis for the movie *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* (1995), while *El Cónsul de Sodoma* (*Consul of Sodoma*, 2009) loosely follows Biedma's *Retrato*. The purpose of this paper is to explore the relationships between the Far East and the Mediterranean worlds through the crossing of boundaries between genres of discourse and artistic expressions.

Karen Casey Casebier, University of Tennessee, "Classical Mythology in Film Adaptations of *La Belle et la Bête*."

Abstracts: *La Belle et la Bête* is an 18th-century fairy tale that has been retold on screen several times, and nearly all cinematic versions of the story use classical myth in their re-invention of the story. This paper will compare the use of myth in Jean Cocteau's 1946 classic black-and-white film, the 1991 Disney animation, and Christophe Gans' 2014 feature film, whose combination of live-action and CGI imagery features a *mise-en-abyme* of storytelling, visual and narrative elements that constitute both a homage and a pastiche of his on-screen predecessors, and an expanded version of the Cupid and Psyche myth that owes more to Mme Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve's 1740 version than to Mme Leprince de Beaumont's 1756 abridgement. Much like the intended audience of the film adaptations, which were marketed either to adults or to children, de Villeneuve's tale was fantastic literature written to entertain an adult audience, whereas Leprince de Beaumont's version was intended for children's moral education. As such, the influence of classical mythology in cinematic adaptations of the popular children's tale may concentrate on facile explanations of the prince's curse or serve as a complex narrative device that supports the intertextuality and intratextuality of the film adaptation.

Netanel Flamer, Bar-Ilan University, "All the World's a Cage": A Cinematic Analysis of Hamas's Hostage Videos as Part of Its Psychological Warfare Effort During the post-October 7 Gaza War (October 2023–Spring 2025)." (VIRTUAL)

Abstracts: As part of its effort to influence hearts and minds, Hamas operated a highly organized system of psychological warfare throughout the conflict, with Israel—both Israeli society and its decision-makers—as a primary target audience. The focus of Hamas's psychological campaign was the issue of the hostages, based on the recognition that this was an exceptionally sensitive topic through which it could most effectively influence Israeli public opinion. This study offers an in-depth cinematic analysis of dozens of video clips produced by Hamas featuring the hostages, as part of this psychological warfare effort against Israel. The innovative perspective adopted here allows for new insights into the structure of this campaign, its objectives, and Hamas's underlying intentions. In doing so, the article contributes not only to the understanding of the struggle between Hamas and Israel, but also—more broadly—to the study of how terrorist organizations utilize cinematic means to enhance the effectiveness of the consciousness warfare they wage against states.

2C. Classic Romance, Fables, and Legends

Chair: Esther Hertzog, Zefat Academic College

Amy Aronson, Valdosta State University, "De-Christianization in the Sephardic Romancero."

Abstract: In the field of medieval Spanish literary criticism, texts are usually studied and analyzed from a European, Christian, Latin perspective. Be it for lack of interest, knowledge, or resources, Western critics tend not to study "the other side," i.e. research conducted from the perspective of a Jewish or Muslim minority. Therefore, it is not uncommon to discover a dearth of commentaries on Medieval Peninsular texts from a non-Christian perspective, be it Muslim or Jewish. In the study of medieval Spanish literature, Western/Christian as well as Eastern/Muslim/Jewish perspectives are worthy of consideration.

One Spanish literary form meriting further investigation and discussion from the “other” perspective is that of the Sephardic romance. The examination and analysis of the romance, or narrative song of the people who sang in the Romance languages of Iberian origin, Spanish, Judeo-Spanish, Portuguese and Catalan, was in vogue as a source of scholarly research during the 1950s, not only as a phenomenon of the international appreciation of the ballad but also as a topic of philological, folkloric, and literary research. The Spanish romance, a traditional and archaic poetry, learned and recited orally from memory with roots in Medieval Spain, dates from at least the beginning of the fourteenth-century to the present with a large number of romances being documented for the first time in the sixteenth century. Dating individual romances is difficult due to the poems’ oral, epic-lyrical, collective, anonymous, popular, and evolutionary nature. Consequently, the poems tend to evolve, change, and renovate themselves in accordance with the changing value systems of consecutive generations of oral transmitters.

In the first decades after the Second World War, interest in the Sephardic romancero and its two branches, the Western and the Eastern Mediterranean—became the object of special attention of scholars Samuel G. Armistead and Joseph H. Silverman. Interest in the Sephardic romancero was the result of a series of historical events:

the ruin, from the Nazi persecutions of the Jewish communities of the Balkans, the formation of a monolingual Neo-Hebrew speaking state in Palestine, the absorption of immigrant Sephardim in America by local communities and cultures, the nationalist movements in the Muslim states of North Africa, and the aspiration of Turkey to achieve a rapid homogenization of its non-Muslim minorities (Diego Catalán 3).

As a result of these events, researchers were convinced of the necessity to recover the last vestiges of the Judeo-Spanish romance before the remaining members of the Sephardic communities of this world passed on to the next and the genre disappeared from the canon of medieval Hispanic literature. Because the Spanish romancero had been studied in detail by medieval Hispanists, the focus of this presentation is to analyze and discuss one particular element peculiar to the Judeo-Spanish oral tradition, the process of de-Christianization, a topic which has not received enough attention in the field of medieval Spanish romancero studies.

Lynn Ramey, Vanderbilt University, “San Brandanu in Sicily: Norman Networks and the Mediterranean Afterlife of St. Brendan.”

Abstracts: This paper traces the unexpected Mediterranean afterlife of The Voyage of St. Brendan, a legend most often associated with the North Atlantic. While the ninth-century *Navigatio* provided the basis for wide European circulation, it was the early twelfth-century Anglo-Norman poem by Benedeit that reframed Brendan’s story as an adventure and helped fuel new Latin redactions. Through these intermediaries, the legend traveled into southern Romance vernaculars—appearing in Occitan and Catalan translations of the *Legenda aurea* and in Italian *volgarizzamenti* from Tuscan to Venetian traditions. Cartographers in Genoa and Catalonia

inscribed “St Brendan’s Island” on Mediterranean portolan charts, while Norman Sicily preserved a cult site in Brontë dedicated to San Brandanu. Taken together, these textual, visual, and devotional witnesses reveal how an Irish Atlantic saint became embedded within Mediterranean cultural networks. The paper highlights the mechanisms—translation, cartography, and Norman diaspora—by which insular legend entered and reshaped Mediterranean imaginaries.

John Dagenais, University of California, Los Angeles, “From Basra to Sephardic Thessalonika via the Maghreb, Arles and Frankfort: “The Case of the Animals versus Man” (10th Century-1867).”

Abstracts: “The Case of the Animals versus Man before the King of the Jinn” by the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ (Brethren of Purity) was written in Arabic in the late 10th century by this group of scholars based in Basra. The “Case” is part of a widely circulated encyclopedic collection of 52 “epistles” written by the brethren. In it the animals bring a case against humankind for its abuses of animal species. This animal tale was extremely popular and had travelled to the Maghreb by at least the 11th century. From there it follows an itinerary that takes it to eastern Iberia, then on to Arles, where it is translated into Hebrew by Kalonymos ben Kalonymos (14th century). This Hebrew version, as printed in Frankfort, is taken back to Thessalonika and printed in 1867 in a Judeo-Spanish translation for the large community of Sephardic Jews. I discuss this book, which was printed using Hebrew characters to represent the sounds of Judeo-Spanish: so-called Hebrew aljamiado writing.

2D. The Courts of Florence, Pisa and Livorno: An Observatory on the Mediterranean Space in the Early Modern Age

Chair: Alessandro Lo Bartolo, Università di Pisa

Alessandro Lo Bartolo, Università di Pisa, “The Consoli del Mare of Pisa: Merchants between Patrizi Fiorentini and Legum Doctores (c. 1500–1700).”

Abstract: It is well known that the development of commercial and maritime justice during the early modern age has its roots in the practice of courts that dealt daily with merchants active in local and global trade. It is equally well known that this development was influenced by at least two European social processes: on the one hand, the aristocratization of the merchant elites; on the other, the growing number of Doctor of Law and legal practitioners active in the commercial courtrooms. Since historiography has focused primarily on the daily practices, the social dimension of these processes has received less attention.

The Consoli del Mare offers an excellent case study, given the wide availability of archival documentation and the growing importance acquired by Livorno in Mediterranean trade. Adopting a prosopographic approach, this paper investigates the social status of the men who served as Consoli del Mare in Pisa between 1500 and 1700. It emerges that most of the men in charge of the magistracy remained deeply involved in the Mediterranean trade despite their refashioning as patrizi and nobili fiorentini, while the chancellors of the court were chosen by the Grand Duke among the growing class of non-florentine lawyers.

Jacopo Pessina, Università di Pisa, “Defining Identities during the Morean War: The History of Giovanni from Lindos at the End of the 17th Century.”

Abstract: This paper investigates the 1690 trial held in Pisa by the Inquisition against Giovanni del fu Costantino da Lindo di Rodi, an illiterate shepherd. The trial centered on the charge that Giovanni was secretly a Muslim, a claim later revealed to be based on fraud, as he was, in fact, Greek Orthodox. This analysis applies Nassim Taleb's theory of “anti-fragility” to examine the differing responses to stress within the community. Giovanni is characterized as a “fragile” subject: his lack of agency and inability to adapt to the sudden change and shock of the trial resulted in significant damage. In contrast, the Greek Orthodox community of Livorno demonstrated “anti-fragility.” Unlike Giovanni, this collective entity gained from the disorder and volatility of the event, successfully mobilizing resources and community strength to overturn the wrongful charges, thereby acting as the resilient system that ensured Giovanni's survival.

Andrea Addobbati, Università di Pisa, “Mystery in Thessaloniki. The Murder of Consul Haldimand.”

Abstract: This paper examines a bloody event that had a huge impact on European newspapers, caused by the cultural divide and mistrust that continued to hinder the smooth running of business on the border between the Ottoman and European worlds at the end of the 18th century. The episode allows us to take a closer look at the problems of the tobacco trade in Thessaloniki and to assess the limited cultural, political, and institutional resources available to operators to address and manage crises in a coordinated manner.

Lorenzo Benedetti, Università di Pisa, “Laws are Made to Be Broken: Inheritance, Rights, and Religious Issues in the Early Modern Mediterranean.”

Abstract: In 1748, Caggi Luigi Zaccheria appeared before the Auditore Vicario of Livorno to assert his rights concerning the legacy of an Orthodox merchant, Luigi Iconomo, who lived in the port-city. This legal action marked the beginning of a long dispute that involved public institutions both in Livorno and Florence, eventually reaching the attention of the Council of Regency and the Magistrato Supremo. The case exceeded the sheer limits of the private sphere, involving certain general principles of canon and Justinian law, and encroaching upon the privileges enjoyed by non-Catholics living in Pisa and Livorno. The judgment would constitute a precedent in matters of inheritance and rights of foreigners in Tuscany, thereby modifying a cornerstone of contemporary jurisprudence.

2E. Encounters in the Ottoman and Turkish Eras

Chair: Shelby Jones, Purdue University

Yuval Ben-Bassat, University of Haifa, “The Ottoman Mukhtar Books in the Archives in Jerusalem: From the Official Ottoman Census to Independent Registration.”

Abstracts: This study presents eight rare mukhtar books from the late Ottoman period preserved in the Israel State Archives in Jerusalem that have never been studied in depth or as a whole. Mukhtars compiled population registry books in their communities as part of their duties to the

Ottoman authorities to accurately record important demographic changes such as deaths, births, and changes of residence. However, the eight mukhtar books examined here differ considerably from each other in terms of style, the information they contain, and format. This suggests that there were no clear rules on how mukhtar books should be composed or updated and raises questions concerning the extent to which they were official and authoritative documents whose data were ratified by the authorities.

To better understand these discrepancies, a series of analyses was conducted to explore the differences between these mukhtar books, to determine whether they were in fact drafts the mukhtars used to prepare for their dealings with the authorities and periodically note demographic changes in their communities. The eight mukhtar books provide an unconventional micro-level view of diverse communities in Ottoman Palestine at the end of the Ottoman period.

Shelby Jones, Purdue University, “General Lew Wallace and American Commodities in the Ottoman Mediterranean (1881-1885).”

Abstracts: Between 1881 and 1885, General Lew Wallace served as the U.S. Minister to the Ottoman Empire. His tenure unfolded at a crucial moment when Americans reconsidered their commercial presence overseas. While scholars have traced the transport of American exports to Ottoman ports, their works often overlook the important role that a diplomat would play to access markets for their country’s commodities. My paper therefore examines how Wallace would do so in the Ottoman Mediterranean. Diplomatic memos and commercial records reveal how Wallace assisted American entrepreneurs whose commodities encountered Ottoman trade barriers. Ottoman policies prohibited pork imports, levied tariffs on alcohol, and instituted strict depot regulations for petroleum, and it became Wallace’s duty to negotiate for revised policies toward these American commodities. Through an examination of Wallace’s efforts, my paper will contend that he played a key role in facilitating American commerce in the Ottoman Mediterranean during the late-nineteenth century.

Esen Kirdiş, Rhodes College, “Why do Dominant Parties Radicalize?: Islamist Outbidding in Turkey.”

Abstracts: Since consolidating dominance in 2011, Turkey’s Justice and Development Party (AKP), the country’s ruling party for the past twenty plus years and the world’s longest-governing Islamic party, has pursued a strategy of Islamist outbidding, advancing religious rhetoric and policies more radical than the societal mainstream. This includes invoking Quranic principles in economic policy, aligning with fringe Islamist groups, and reshaping education to foreground Islamic identity, even as Turkish society grows more secular and diverse. Why would a dominant party utilize such tactics despite declining electoral returns and limited public demand for religious radicalization? Drawing on Turkish politics, state-led radicalization, and theories of ideological outbidding as well as through process tracing of speeches, policy documents, and public opinion since 2011, this paper will investigate how the Party used Islamist outbidding to navigate electoral threats, consolidate patronage networks, build cultural hegemony, and intensify societal polarization.

Lunch Break: 13:30 - 15:00

Session 3: 15:00 - 17:00

3A. Spaces, Landscapes, and Infrastructures in the Mediterranean World

Chair: Monica Garoiu, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Anat Kidron, Tel Hai Academic College, “Shaping the Seaside, Shaping the City: The Development of the Urban Waterfront and the Formation of Collective Consciousness in the Mixed City of Mandatory Haifa.” (VIRTUAL)

Abstracts: This proposed paper explores the development of Haifa’s Mediterranean coastline as a site of negotiation between local coexistence and national Zionist imagination during the British Mandate and early decades of Israeli statehood. Unlike other port cities of the eastern Mediterranean, Haifa’s seafront became a contested urban frontier—simultaneously a locus of everyday encounters between Jews and Arabs, and a symbolic terrain for projecting Zionist modernity and sovereignty.

Drawing on municipal planning archives, visual materials, and contemporary press, the paper traces how beaches, promenades, and port facilities were imbued with ideological meaning: the sea as both boundary and promise; the beach as a laboratory of citizenship and leisure; and coastal modernization as a metaphor for the national project.

By situating the case of Haifa within the broader Mediterranean context, the paper contributes to discussions on the spatial politics of coastal urbanism, the role of leisure spaces in shaping collective identities, and the tension between cosmopolitanism and nationalism along the modern eastern Mediterranean shore.

Ilan Shchori, University of Haifa, “The Old Man and the Sea Meir Dizengoff’s Special Attitude to the Development of Tel Aviv’s Seaside.”

Abstracts: One of the greatest gifts of the city of Tel Aviv, in fact since its founding, is the unique beach, located on the Mediterranean coast. A beach that began to develop in the early 1920s, just a few years after the city was founded. Initially a small beach on the corner of Allenby Street, it expanded in a little over a decade to the Yarkon River, a spectacular stretch of beach that continues in this area for more than ten kilometers and has been, for many years and in fact to this day, a central component of the lives of Tel Aviv residents and the image of Tel Aviv as a coastal city. Most of the development of this stretch of beach was during the days of the mythical, first mayor of Tel Aviv, Meir Dizengoff, who ruled it unchallenged from the time he received the title of mayor in May 1921 until his death in September 1936. The lecture will present the activities that were carried out and the transformation of Tel Aviv into one of the most spectacular beaches and promenades in the Mediterranean basin.

Martine Sauret, Macalester College, “Picrocholine Wars in Rabelais’s Gargantua (1534); Places of Discontent.”

Abstracts: Rabelais demonstrates in his Gargantua of 1534 that war and maps go hand in hand. If the spaces of Luce and Chinonais in France are clearly depicted in the second part of the book,

the architecture of the war in 3 specific chapters in this region where the Picrocholine war is confined indicates more ingenuity, creativity and knowledge of geography from Rabelais. The war indeed seems to spread through the words of his 3 aides from the shores of France to reach the Mediterranean Sea, Central Europe, Africa and Asia minor.

So how should one read this war? And those spaces? In this paper we will demonstrate how Rabelais seems to constantly challenge the reader to investigate further the notions of places, spaces and people questioning the leadership of Picrocholine, the catastrophe of war while presenting his humanistic views through GrandGousier, his gentle giant.

Burcu Göksoy, Istanbul Bilgi University, “Revisiting a Vernacular Mediterranean Typology through a Design-build Workshop.” (VIRTUAL)

Abstracts: This paper presents the process and outcomes of a two-week design-build workshop held in Datça, a town on the Aegean coast of Anatolia, in September 2025. The workshop brought together twelve architecture and interior design students and five tutors and unfolded in three phases. The first involved brief research into a traditional wooden structure used in Datça’s agricultural fields until the 1980s. The second phase focused on a co-design process to reinterpret this rural typology for contemporary use in the region’s rural settlements. In the final phase, students and tutors collaboratively constructed the co-designed project at 1:1 scale for the residents of Hızırşah Village in Datça. The paper demonstrates how the workshop revived the memory of an obsolete Mediterranean rural structure, offered hands-on experience in lightweight timber construction for its participants, and contributed to the local community by enhancing the quality of its public space.

3B. Intercultural Family Relationships and Gender

Chair: Ana Clara Birrento, University of Evora

Esther Hertzog, Zefat Academic College, “From Integration to Marginalization: Ethiopian Children in Israel’s Education System.”

Abstracts: Although Israel officially promoted the integration of Ethiopian immigrant children during the 1980s and 1990s, in my presentation I shall describe how actual educational practices fostered systemic segregation. I argue that the use of separate "absorption classes" was not a policy mishap but a deliberate strategy benefiting absorption organizations through increased funding and institutional power. These bodies invoked “cultural differences” to justify separation, deflecting responsibility for educational shortcomings onto the immigrants themselves. Drawing from a year-long field study at an absorption center housing 300 Ethiopian immigrants during the first immigration wave, I shall present case studies of exclusion and discrimination. As an assistant to a volunteer cultural officer, I observed firsthand the bureaucratic structures that marginalized children and reinforced power imbalances. The consequences were long-term: alongside immediate educational setbacks, Ethiopian children endured persistent stigmatization. Using Central Bureau of Statistics data, I shall demonstrate how these early policies contributed to lower higher education attainment among Ethiopian-Israelis today.

Deniz Yucel, William Paterson University of New Jersey, “Invisible Work, Visible Costs: Cognitive Labor and Psychological Well-Being Among Parents.” (VIRTUAL)

Abstracts: While many studies examine how division of household labor impacts relationship-specific and health-related outcomes, fewer consider the cognitive dimension of household labor (i.e., cognitive labor). To fill this gap, using data on partnered parents from the fifth wave of The Study on Parents’ Division of Labor during COVID-19 (SPDLC), this study examines the association between cognitive labor and parents’ physical and mental health outcomes. Further, it tests whether family-to-work conflict mediates this association and whether the strength of this mediating effect differs between mothers and fathers. Results indicate that cognitive labor is negatively associated with parents’ psychological well-being, but not with physical health. Moreover, this negative association is partially explained by higher family-to-work conflict. Importantly, this mediating effect is stronger among mothers than fathers, highlighting gendered patterns in the consequences of cognitive labor. Overall, this study is among the first to quantitatively examine cognitive labor and to identify family-to-work conflict as a key mechanism linking cognitive labor to well-being, thereby advancing understanding of the gendered implications of cognitive labor for parental health.

Yehudit Dror, University of Haifa, “Gender and Grammar in the Qur’ān: The Representation of Men and Women.”

Abstracts: The study of discourse and gender is an interdisciplinary field that investigates how language reflects, constructs, and perpetuates gendered social structures. While “gender” in linguistics can denote grammatical distinctions such as masculine and feminine forms, contemporary gender studies interrogate how such grammatical structures intersect with cultural and ideological norms. One pressing question in this domain is how grammar both encodes and reinforces gender roles and relations. This presentation contributes to this discussion by examining how grammatical gender in the Qur’ānic text reveals underlying assumptions about gendered subjectivity, power, and social roles.

Tomasz Lidzbarski, University of Gdańsk, “Islands of Gender Inequality? Power Dynamics and the Domestic Sphere in Polish Greek Intermarriages on the Ionian Sea.”

Abstracts: Intermarriages between Polish women and Greek men on the Ionian Islands offer a unique lens into the reproduction and contestation of gendered power relations in a transnational context. Drawing on a year of ethnographic fieldwork – including 119 interviews and participant observation – the analysis traces how foreign wives are positioned within traditional family structures and navigate expectations of obedience, domesticity, and moral respectability. Rather than clear signs of integration, these relationships often reveal processes of symbolic boundary-making and conditional acceptance. Women adopt a range of strategies – from adaptation to subtle resistance and hybrid negotiation – shaped by their migration paths, personal histories, and local kinship dynamics. Gender emerges not as a private matter but as a socially regulated script embedded in broader narratives of belonging, purity, and cultural continuity. These findings challenge assumptions about intermarriage as a path to inclusion and highlight the ambivalent position of migrant femininity within mediterranean societies.

3C. Geopolitical Ideologies and Maritime Practices in the Mediterranean

Chair: Susan L. Rosenstreich, Dowling College

Angelos Giannakopoulos, Tel Aviv University, “The Greek Diplomatic Initiative 5X5 in the Context of Further Schemes of State Cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean.”

Abstracts: At the end of 2025, the Greek government launched a cooperation program that is of great symbolic importance, as it aims to resolve important common challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean between five states bordering Greece: Cyprus, Egypt, Turkey, and Libya, with the most important being the delimitation of maritime zones. This initiative should be seen, firstly, as an extension of existing cooperation frameworks, in which Greece, Israel, Cyprus, Egypt, and Jordan already participate, and secondly, as part of broader existing programs, such as the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor involving countries in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East, and the Gulf, supported by the US government. The purpose of this presentation is to examine the impact of various cooperation programs and strategies implemented in the Eastern Mediterranean that affect not only the Mediterranean but the European Union as a whole, both politically and economically.

Ksenia Bonch Reeves, Wright State University, “Caveat Emptor: Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada and the Origins of Modern Spanish Historical Essentialism.”

Abstracts: Since the early 1980s, as Spain emerged from decades of dictatorial rule, scholarly attention has increasingly turned toward uses and misuses of Spain’s past as a means of advancing political goals of the present. This has led to an ongoing reexamination of the twentieth-century philological and historical tradition, particularly of the ways in which Spain’s most prominent scholars became instruments, willing or accidental, of nationalist propaganda during the decades of Francoism (1939-75). Spanish philologist Ramón Menéndez Pidal (1969-1968) and historian Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz (1983-1984) are considered among the chief exponents of Spanish philological and historical nationalism. This article outlines parallels between these scholars’ modern Spanish/Castilian essentialism and its medieval precursor in the *Historia de rebus Hispaniae siue Historia gothica* (1243), penned by thirteenth-century Castilian historian Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (c. 1170-1247). This comparative study examines how critical approaches to primary sources may become obscured by ideological priorities of our own time and place.

Maya Mark, Ben-Gurion University, “Ideology and Memory in the Postwar Mediterranean: The Israeli Debate over Reparations.”

Abstracts: This paper examines the political opposition within Israel to the 1952 Reparations Agreement with West Germany, focusing on the distinct rationales articulated by both the left and the right. It argues that, despite their ideological differences, both camps perceived the agreement as a defining moment in the shaping of Israel’s national identity and as a threat to their core political projects. For the socialist left, opposition stemmed from a commitment to a pro-Soviet orientation and resistance to Western geopolitical influence, while for the right it reflected a moral rejection of reconciliation with Germany and a concern that the agreement would undermine the effort to construct a post-Holocaust Jewish nationalism. Situating the

debate within the broader context of Cold War rivalries and postwar reconstruction, the paper demonstrates that what appeared as a domestic political struggle was in fact embedded in wider ideological and geopolitical transformations across the postwar Mediterranean and Europe.

3D. Mediterranean Insularity: Literary and Artistic Representations (19th-21st Centuries)

Chair: **Chair:** Stéphane Sawas, INALCO

Laure Lévêque, Université de Toulon, "Mathias Sandorf (1885) by Jules Verne, or the Possibility of an Island." "Mathias Sandorf (1885) by Jules Verne, or the possibility of an island"

Abstract: Abondamment sollicité au fil des "Voyages extraordinaires", le motif de l'île y fait l'objet d'actualisations contradictoires, qui vont de la terre de non-droit au refuge d'hospitalité. Entre utopie et dystopie, toutes s'affichent microcosme du macrocosme qui tendent un miroir à une terre des hommes où le vivre-ensemble est abîmé et la justice inique. Avec cette réécriture assumée du "Comte de Monte-Cristo", Jules Verne sonde ces questions à l'échelle du bassin méditerranéen qui sert de cadre à un "Mathias Sandorf" aussi profondément politique que son modèle. Sur les traces de ce nouvel Edmond Dantès, patriote hongrois en butte aux persécutions autrichiennes, ce sont tous les bords de la Méditerranée qui bruissent des heurts entre impérialismes d'État et mouvement des nationalités jusqu'à ce que, renaissant dans l'apatride docteur Antékirtt, Sandorf investisse une île fictive nichée dans le golfe de Syrte où rebâtir une communauté humaine autarcique fonctionnelle sur la base de l'adhésion volontaire, dans une remise sous tension fictionnelle des thèses avancées par Ernest Renan dans son "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation ?" (1882).

Frequently used throughout the Extraordinary Voyages series, the island motif is subject to contradictory interpretations, ranging from a lawless land to a hospitable refuge. Between utopia and dystopia, all are microcosms of the macrocosm, as they mirror a world where coexistence is compromised and justice is unfair.

With this deliberate rewriting of The Count of Monte Cristo, Jules Verne explores these issues on the scale of the Mediterranean basin, which serves as the setting for Mathias Sandorf, a character as deeply political as his model. In the footsteps of this new Edmond Dantès, a Hungarian patriot facing Austrian persecution, the entire Mediterranean coast is in turmoil, with clashes between state imperialism and nationalist movements until, reborn as the stateless Doctor Antékirtt, Sandorf takes over a fictional island nestled in the Gulf of Sirte, where he rebuilds a functional and self-sufficient human community based on voluntary membership, in a fictional reworking of the theories put forward by Ernest Renan in his book "What is a Nation?" (1882).

Sara Izzo, Université de Salzbourg, "Traces, itinéraires et îles : la Méditerranée telle que dépeinte par le journalisme graphique français et italien sur la crise migratoire contemporaine" "Traces, Routes and Islands: The Mediterranean as Depicted in French and Italian Graphic Journalism on the Contemporary Migration Crisis."

Abstract: Cette contribution est consacrée à la représentation intermédiaire de la Méditerranée dans les récits français et italiens contemporains sur la migration relevant du journalisme graphique. Dans une perspective comparative, une sélection de reportages sera analysée sous l'angle de leurs configurations spatiales géosymboliques. À la croisée du texte et de l'image, des faits et de la fiction, ces reportages dessinés narrent, à partir de documents cartographiques et photographiques, les histoires de migrants nord-africains qui traversent la Méditerranée vers l'Europe. Les villes, les prisons, les îles et les bateaux en tant qu'espaces-seuils entre les deux continents sont ainsi mis en avant. Seront étudiés "Libia" (2019) de Francesca Mannocchi et Gianluca Costantini, "Salvezza" (2018) de Lelio Bonaccorso et Marco Rizzo, "Le Murmure de la mer" (2024) d'Hippolyte et "Méditerranée. Histoires d'un continent kaléidoscope" (2025) d'Aurel. Une attention particulière sera accordée à la fonction de l'île dans les récits sélectionnés.

This paper focuses on the intermedial representation of the Mediterranean in contemporary Italian and French graphic journalism narratives about migration. Selected reports will be analysed from a comparative perspective with regard to their geosymbolic spatial configurations. In the tension between text and image, fact and fiction, the comic reportages document the life stories of North African migrants who emigrate to Europe via the Mediterranean, based on cartographic and photographic materials. Cities, prisons, islands and boats emerge as threshold spaces between the two continents. Examined comic reportages include Libia (2019) by Francesca Mannocchi and Gianluca Costantini, Salvezza (2018) by Lelio Bonaccorso and Marco Rizzo, and Le murmure de la mer (2024) by Hippolyte, as well as Méditerranée. Histoires d'un continent kaléidoscope (2025) by Aurel. Special attention is paid to the role of islands in the selected narratives.

Marcin Skibicki, Université Nicolas Copernic de Toruń, "Mots-clés : affiche, publicité, tourisme, Méditerranée, îles" "The Island Imagination Through 20th- Century Mediterranean Seaside Posters."

Abstract: Depuis la fin du XIX^e siècle, la représentation des îles méditerranéennes dans la culture visuelle européenne nourrit, à la croisée du réel et du rêve, un imaginaire spécifique – celui d'un sud solaire, harmonieux et intemporel. L'affiche balnéaire, médium populaire et artistique à la fois, joue un rôle déterminant dans cette mise en image du mythe méditerranéen. Sous le pinceau de Roger Broders ou Jean-Gabriel Domergue, l'île, plus qu'un territoire, se fait symbole d'une utopie moderne où s'unissent nature, beauté et liberté. L'objectif de cette communication est d'analyser comment les affiches balnéaires ont participé à la construction d'une identité méditerranéenne en mobilisant l'imaginaire des îles. On s'interrogera aussi sur les codes "édéniques" repris par les affichistes qui vantent "l'esthétique de la sérénité" que Jean-Didier Urbain nomme "l'utopie balnéaire" et "l'esthétique du divers" de Victor Segalen qui, bien qu'initialement ancrée dans les cultures lointaines, se prête à l'étude de la construction des mécanismes d'uniformisation de la différence véhiculés par l'affiche touristique.

Since the end of the 19th century, the representation of Mediterranean islands in European visual culture has nurtured a specific imaginary world, at the crossroads of reality and dreams—that of a sunny, harmonious, and timeless south. The seaside poster, a medium that is both popular and artistic, plays a decisive role in this visualization of the Mediterranean myth. Under the brush of Roger Broders or Jean-Gabriel Domergue, the island, more than a territory, becomes a symbol of a modern utopia where nature, beauty, and freedom unite. The aim of this paper is to analyze how seaside posters have contributed to the construction of a Mediterranean identity by mobilizing the imagination of the islands. We will also examine the “Edenic” codes used by poster artists who extol the aesthetics of serenity that Jean-Didier Urbain calls “seaside utopia”, and Victor Segalen’s aesthetic of diversity, which, although initially rooted in distant cultures, lends itself to the study of the construction of mechanisms for standardizing difference conveyed by tourist posters.

Stéphane Sawas, INALCO, “Les plages crétoises au cinéma : fonctions narratives et dramatiques d’un patrimoine naturel des années 1960 à nos jours.” “Cretan Beaches in Cinema: Narrative and Dramatic Functions of a Natural Heritage from the 1960s to the Present Day.”

Abstract: La Crète, qui dans l’après-guerre s’impose comme une destination majeure du tourisme en Méditerranée, inspire rapidement cinéastes grecs et étrangers malgré les difficultés de tournage liées à l’éloignement du continent. À travers un corpus de dix films de genres différents, réalisés des années 1960 à nos jours, cette communication se propose d’étudier la 21onder21ion21s21n des plages crétoises dans la fiction cinématographique. Entre utopies et dystopies, elles 21onder 21 de toile de fond, occasionnelle ou structurelle, don’t l’arrivée de 21onder21ion21s étrangers, le plus souvent en villégiature, révèle la forte altérité. De la palmeraie de Vai à l’île de Gavdos en passant par les grottes de Matala, ces espaces littoraux suscitent, dans leur splendeur et leur diversité, 21onder21ion des corps, exacerbation des passions et nouveau rapport au temps. Cet environnement naturel, dans lequel en viennent à se 21onder les personnages, favorise in fine redécouverte de soi et ouverture à l’autre.

Crete, which in the post-war period established itself as a major tourist destination in the Mediterranean, quickly inspired Greek and foreign filmmakers despite filming problems linked to its remoteness from the mainland. Through a corpus of ten films of different genres, made between the 1960s and the present day, this paper aims to study the representation of Cretan beaches in cinematic fiction. Between utopias and dystopias, they serve as an occasional or structural backdrop whose strong otherness is revealed by the arrival of foreign protagonists, most often on holiday. From the palm grove of Vai to the island of Gavdos via the caves of Matala, these coastal areas, in all their splendour and diversity, inspire physical liberation, heightened passions and a new relationship with time. This natural environment, into which the characters merge, ultimately encourages self-rediscovery and openness to others.

Thursday, May 28

Session 4: 9:15 – 11:15 am

4A. Political Agency and Identity

Chair: Elad Ben-Dror, Bar-Ilan University

Elad Ben-Dror and Haggai Frank, Bar-Ilan University, “Czechoslovakia’s Military Assistance to the State of Israel in the First Arab Israeli War.”

Abstracts: A fundamental question still asked about the circumstances that enabled the IDF to emerge victorious from Israel's War of Independence concerns the quantity of weapons possessed by the two sides in the conflict. Although the balance of arms at the war's outset was decisively in favor of the Arab states, the leadership of Israel managed to close this gap. This lecture highlights the key role played by Czechoslovakia, as the chief arms supplier of the IDF during the war. It considers the process by which the relationship was formed and the arms acquired, the key players involved, and the procured arms' decisive impact on the hostilities. The lecture is part of a broader study based primarily on archival documents from Israel and the Czech Republic

Markus Loewe, German Institute of Development and Sustainability, “The Social Contract and Collective Action: Grievances, Cleavages and Protests in Tunisia and Lebanon.”

Abstracts: How do grievances turn to collective action? This article examines how citizens' expectations in social contracts lead them to embark on street protests. It draws on original, nationally representative telephone surveys in Tunisia and Lebanon and unpacks popular preferences about the states' obligations to deliver social service provision, protection, and political participation. We measure empirically whether participation in protest can be explained predominantly by people's grievances with their states' social contract obligations or the position of people in society. Findings reveal intriguing differences between the two countries, but also among social groups within societies. We find that socially privileged people are more likely to take to the streets in pursuit of their demands, lending support to theories that identify society's middle classes as drivers of protest action. We believe that the article's findings will have significant implications for studies of contentious state society relations in the MENA region and beyond.

Ana Clara Birrento, Maria Helena Saianda, and Olga Gonçalves, University of Evora, “Memoirs, Politics and Voice.”

Abstracts: The paper examines political memoirs as a form of life writing in which memory, identity and public service intersect. Focussing on two autobiographical texts: “Memoirs” and “A politician takes upon himself”, by Francisco Pinto Balsemão and Mário Soares, respectively, two protagonists of Portuguese democracy, this case study draws on theoretical approaches from memory studies and political discourse. The discursive construction of memoirs reflects the construction of a Self and its insertion in the collective history. The two texts are read as performative acts of self-construction in which the political subject ‘assumes himself’ through

narrative voice. Rather than treating memory as a transparent recollection, the study foregrounds its mediated, constructed and strategic dimensions, showing how the two voices allow to highlight different models of political agency and leadership and to reflect on memoir as both a technology of the Self and a form of political intervention within democratic culture.

Basilus Bawardi, Bar Ilan University, “Politics of Disappearance and Fragmented Identity in the Novels of Ibtisam Azem: Narrative Strategies in the Post–Arab Spring Era.”

Abstracts: This lecture examines the narrative strategies of absence, fragmentation, and psychological disengagement in Ibtisam Azem’s novels *The Book of Disappearance* and *The Book of Sleep* and explores how these two works reconfigure Palestinian identity through non-linear, polyphonic, and surreal literary forms. Writing in the wake of the Arab Spring, Azem departs from earlier models of nationalist realism and adopts a postcolonial, post-traumatic aesthetic that foregrounds uncertainty, spectral presence, and the disruption of historical continuity. The sudden disappearance of Palestinians in *The Book of Disappearance* is not merely a fantastic premise, but a metaphor for the ongoing erasure of Palestinian history and presence. Through doubled narrative voices and shifting temporalities, Azem engages with the politics of memory, language, and geography under settler colonialism.

The Book of Sleep deepens this inquiry by relocating disappearance into the body, dreams, and split consciousness of its protagonist. Haunted by trauma, insomnia, and existential instability, the character becomes a figure of psychic exile, embodying the liminality of post-Nakba Palestinian subjectivity. In both novels, Azem resists narrative closure, opting instead for structures that formally register the unresolved condition of Palestinian history and identity. By tightening and destabilizing the boundaries between reality and hallucination, past and present, self and other, her fictional work becomes a literary act of resistance—one that challenges dominant narratives and insists on the political significance of narrative disruption.

4B. Diplomacy and War in the Mediterranean in the Last Half of the Eighteenth-Century

Chair: Salvatore Bottari, University of Messina

Salvatore Bottari, University of Messina, “The Russo-Turkish War of 1787-1792 in the Italian Sources.”

Abstract: Italian sources portray the Russo-Turkish War of 1787–1792 as a decisive episode in late eighteenth-century geopolitics. Gazettes and diplomatic reports followed Russian advances and Ottoman weaknesses, while expressing concern over Austrian ambitions. The Treaty of Jassy was seen as a major shift in the Black Sea balance, marking Russia’s rise and signaling broader transformations in European power relations.

Mirella Mafriaci, University of Salerno, “Politics and Trade between Mediterranean and Black Sea During the Napoleonic Wars.”

Abstract: The opening of the Black Sea to foreign trades and the freedom of navigation for Russia and later Austria, France and other nations brought a new start in commercial relations between these ports and the Mediterranean ones. After the peace of Amiens (1802) ship-owners and merchants addressed the Black Sea for their trade, but the Napoleonic Wars determined a change

of commercial relations in the Mediterranean. For the Ottoman neutrality Turkish ships replaced the French ones in the Levant trade. Moreover, the Continental System affected England 's interests and interfered with the revival of trade in the Kingdom of Naples, conquered by Napoleon in 1806. The treaty of Tilsit (July 7th, 1807) between France, Russian Empire and Prussia influenced the relations in Mediterranean: the weakness of the Ottoman Empire was counterbalanced by the Russian Empire protagonism. The end of the Napoleonic wars created a new equilibrium between the existing players and the new actors of the area. The Kingdom of Naples was part of the Great Empire, and its economy was subservient to France.

Filippo Villari, University of Messina, "The Uprising of Greeks (1770)."

Abstract: The Greek uprising of 1770 emerged during the Russo-Turkish War as part of Russia's strategy to weaken Ottoman authority in the Balkans. Encouraged by Russian agents, Greek insurgents in the Peloponnese sought to challenge Ottoman rule and revive aspirations of autonomy. Despite initial successes, inadequate Russian support and coordinated Ottoman reprisals led to the revolt's collapse. The failed insurrection nevertheless intensified Greek political consciousness and foreshadowed the War of Independence in 1821.

Ugo Muraca, University of Messina, "The Ionian Islands during the Napoleonic Era in the Letters of a Neapolitan officer."

Abstract: During the Napoleonic era, the Ionian Islands assumed central importance in French Mediterranean strategy. The archipelago, located in the middle of the Strait of Otranto, represented a point of access to the Adriatic Sea. In short, possession of the Ionian Islands would have guaranteed Napoleon control of traffic in the area. He would thus have been able to prevent the passage of English merchant ships. In 1808, the political and logistical management of the islands was entrusted to Joachim Murat's Kingdom of Naples. The Neapolitan general Giuseppe Rosaroll (1775-1825) was sent to Zakynthos as governor of the island: his letters provide insight into the local specificities and limitations of the French imperial administration.

4C. Practices in Law, Religion, and Beliefs

Chair: Stelios Panayotakis, University of Crete

Monica Garoiu, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, "Cultural Hybridity and Nomadic Subjectivity in Maryam Madjidi's 'Marx and the Doll'."

Abstracts: This presentation analyzes the autobiographical novel, "Marx and the Doll", by Maryam Madjidi, an acclaimed Francophone writer of Iranian origin whose work explores exile, memory, and identity fragmentation through her childhood displacement from Tehran to Paris during the Islamic Revolution. Drawing on Rosi Braidotti's concept of nomadic subjectivity and Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic theory, I examine how Madjidi constructs identity as fundamentally plural and unstable, challenging fixed notions of cultural belonging. My analysis focuses on three key points: first, how the narrative navigates between languages and cultures (Persian and French), as sites of both loss and creativity; second, how temporal fragmentation disrupts linear notions of memory and selfhood; and third, how cultural hybridity emerges not as deficiency but as

generative potential. Through poetic prose that captures the disorientation of migration while celebrating its creative possibilities, Madjidi reveal

Odeya Schuz, Bar Ilan University, “The Islamic Movement in the Israeli Coalition: Religious-National Tensions in Jewish and Muslim Religious Leadership Discourse.”

Abstracts: Arab citizens of Israel navigate a complex reality as citizens of a state engaged in an identity conflict with their ethnic-religious group. Religion significantly influences identity conflicts, and for the Arab minority in Israel it can generate differentiation from the Arab side and discrimination from the Jewish side. A breakthrough in the Arab integration occurred in 2021 when the Islamist party SIM joined a Zionist coalition, a controversial move with prominent religious dimensions for both sides. This lecture surveys a broad spectrum of positions from influential Israeli Jewish and Muslims religious leaders. It analyzes the discourse and arguments these figures presented in interviews, articles, and rulings, and conducts comparative analysis between Judaism and Islam and between supporters and opponents. Through these examines the tension between nationalism and religion on this issue, identifies religious principles that may help resolve religious complexities, and charts a path for optimal future integration.

Riccardo Iannaccone, University of Pisa, “Biblical Interpretation and Originalist Legal Thought in Israeli Conservatism: Yoram Hazony (1990s–2023).”

Abstracts: In contemporary Israel, debates over religion, law, and political authority take a distinctive form in conservative thought. This paper shows that Hazony’s interpretation of Scripture shapes his originalist reading of Israeli law, demonstrating a consistent methodological continuity across both religious and legal domains. The paper employs close textual analysis within a history of ideas framework, examining Hazony’s essays, books, and public interventions from the late 1990s through 2023 to trace the evolution of his thought. This analysis shows that Hazony mobilizes the Exodus narrative to justify state sovereignty and conservative legal norms, while also critiquing collective reinterpretations of the Torah and liberal judicial expansions of rights, revealing a coherent originalist logic across religious and legal domains. These findings suggest that Hazony’s biblical interpretation offers a structured model of legal reasoning and conceptual clarity, reinforces founding authority, and contributes to debates on law, religion, and Israeli conservative thought.

Fruma Zachs, University of Haifa, “Rationalization of Fear: The Discourse of Superstition among Nahdawi Intellectuals.”

Abstracts: Although supernatural beings are mentioned in the Quran, mainstream Islam is defined as a form of religious rationalism. This however did not prevent Arab Muslims from believing in superstition as is the case for other religions in other regions of the world. The nahda (Arab awakening) movement during the 19th century whose main objectives were driven by rationalism and the endorsement of modern scientific theories and methods sought to delegitimize superstitions and the emotions of fears it fed on and engendered in its bid to create progressive modern Arab nation.

The paper makes a distinction between religious convictions and beliefs in superstition. I show that intellectuals of the nahda, a transitional period from modern to secular society, did not reject religion but rather considered that superstition (an emotional system) in the modern era

constituted the polar opposite of science, reason, and progress. This meant that eradication of superstitions was crucial to transforming the Arab nation into a rational society.

The paper deals with four tenacious superstitions the full moon, children's untimely deaths, jins and ghouls (the belief in spirits, demons) and the evil eye. It is based on lectures and the journals of some of the leading figures of the nahda periods such as Butrus al-Bustani (1819-1883), Mikhail Mishaqa (1800-1880) and Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq (1805/6-1887).

4D. Unexpected Portrayals in Literature

Chair: Caroline Jewers, University of Kansas

Jose-Luis Gastañaga, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, "Summaries and Exempla in the Making of Celestina."

Abstracts: This paper explores an aspect of the writing process in *Celestina*, the late 15th-century Spanish classic. In *Celestina*, several plot summaries are presented through the mouths of different characters. These summaries help readers and listeners stay constantly informed about the development of the story, but they often emphasize the terrible consequences of bad actions. Thus, there is a connection between the way the story is told and the didactic message it repeatedly conveys, both within the work and especially in its paratexts. The goal of this paper is to read *Celestina* as a story that draws parallels with the medieval and early modern sermon in two aspects: the practice of presenting a moral lesson wrapped in an attractive story, and the emphasis on the didactic purpose of that story. *Celestina* introduces a new dimension to the use of exempla in literature.

Caroline Jewers, University of Kansas, "In Praise of the Literary Mystery: David Foenkinos' Le Mystère d'Henri Pick (2016)."

Abstracts: David Foenkinos's 2016 *Le Mystère d'Henri Pick* (adapted for the screen by Rémi Bezançon in 2019) is an amusing and intriguing quest to find the identity of a lost author, supposedly a laconic and very ordinary pizza chef in Crozon, Brittany who penned a heartbreaking and inspiring love story without anyone knowing. The truth behind his authorship of a very literary text leads a publishing editor, a seemingly unsuccessful novelist, and a literary critic on a quest – taking them from the sophisticated heart of Paris to the Library of Failed Manuscripts lodged in Crozon's small village library - on a journey with an unexpected ending. My paper explores the theme of writing and of the intertexts woven into the story: these could not be more diverse. From Richard Brautigan to Pushkin, Flaubert, Robert Walser, Michel Houellebecq, Marguerite Duras – and including the photographs of Vivian Meyer. The ingredients combine to form a truly French mystery: stylish, offbeat, and highly literary, yet inflected with American literature and many layers of cultural references. I explore the theme of writing and authorship, the publishing industry, and artistic creativity in Foenkinos's work.

Susan L. Rosenstreich, Dowling College, "Laws and Liberty in Montesquieu's Lettres Persanes."

Abstracts: The theory of separation of powers laid out in Montesquieu's 1748 work, *L'Esprit des Lois*, or the Spirit of the Laws, has long been considered a diatribe against monarchy. It is true that liberty and the restraint of power were Montesquieu's core principles for the evaluation of

forms of government, but in fact, he saw no challenge to these principles in a monarchy. In fact, a global assessment of his writings concludes that, for this eighteenth century political theorist, monarchy is a better guarantor of the liberty of citizens than either a republic or despotic rule, the two alternatives he offers to monarchy. Not only that, but as careful readers of Montesquieu's works have maintained, the argument of the Spirit of the Laws is that the best form of government for Montesquieu's time and place is the government under which he was living; the regime of Louis XV. Montesquieu clearly voiced his support for monarchy as early as 1721 when he published his widely-read epistolary novel, *Lettres persanes*, *The Persian Letters*. Styled as correspondence among Persians and Frenchmen as the Persians travel through the contemporary Mediterranean, these letters present the France of Montesquieu's time as seen through Persian eyes. Laced with satire and exaggeration, the letters are also good examples of eyewitness reporting, yielding an image of France's governing elite as a greedy and corrupt class threatening to ruin the national social order that had been weakened throughout by the erosion of political liberty. Through a close reading of Letter CII that prefigures pro-monarchical and anti-republican ideas expressed in later works by Montesquieu, it becomes apparent that, in the evolution of his thought, this well-known work immediately establishes his conviction that republican and despotic forms of governance cannot rise to the occasion. Only a monarchy can guarantee social order and the liberty of citizens.

4E. Architectural Design and Public Spaces

Chair: Lynn Purkey, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Carolin Aronis, Colorado State University, "The Philosophy of the Mediterranean Balcony."

Abstracts: This paper theorizes the front balcony as a significant structural element in fostering a sense of identity and belonging within Mediterranean environments. By employing philosophies of architecture and communication and drawing on experiences, art, and media representations from Greece, Turkey, Israel, Tunisia, Morocco, and Spain, I phenomenologize the role of the Mediterranean balcony within fabrics of cities and domestic spaces.

In contrast to the rear balcony and other openings—such as windows, porches, and doors—in residential structures, the balcony not only connects the home to the street but also has unique characteristics. These include setback, power positioning, height, sight, ambiguous functionality, blurred boundaries, and communication within a three-dimensional space.

I pay particular attention to the use of balconies by women, children, the elderly, the disabled, refugees, and other marginalized communities. While these spaces were traditionally designed and built by men, they facilitate diverse forms of engagement, rebellion, and solace.

Şevval Altındağ, Istanbul Bilgi University, "The Agora of Priene as a Space of Political Performance and Social Ritual."

Abstracts: This study will examine Priene Agora as a political stage and a space of social performance during festivals in the Hellenistic period. According to a recent academic view, Hellenistic agoras became arenas of honorific practices tied to euergetism (benefaction), shaping civic consciousness in new ways. The Priene agora was transformed into a stage of

civic unity during the festivals, as evidenced by honorific inscriptions, sculpture, and architectural setup.

To fully understand the role of the agora during festivals, it must be situated within the broader symbolic and physical network created by processions. Yet, the relationship between the agora and the city during the festivals has not been sufficiently explored in scholarship. Building on the notable similarities revealed by the comparative analysis of urban festivals, this study will discuss possible scenarios of processions in the Priene agora and will propose potential routes within the city through mapping.

Coffee Break: 11:15 - 11:30

Session 5: 11:30 – 13:30

5A. Plague, Pandemic, and Place

Chair: Jennifer Ballantine Perera, University of Gibraltar & Gibraltar Garrison Library

Caterina Miraglia, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, “The Plague of Athens: A Mysterious Menace and the Quest for Answers.”

Abstracts: The notorious Plague of Athens (430 – 427 BCE) occurred during the Peloponnesian War and was described extensively by Thucydides, an Athenian general. The Plague delivered the city into crisis, killing an estimated 75,000 – 100,000 people, and brought an end to the Golden Age of Athens (Pentekontaetia). Victims of the Plague experienced a range of symptoms including headache, delirium, severe abdominal pain, bloody vomit, skin lesions, and a feeling that the body was on fire, which ultimately for many, resulted in death. What was the cause of such intense human suffering? This presentation examines the mystery of the Plague of Athens and explores the investigations and theories about the infectious diseases that may have been the culprit of one of the deadliest plagues to affect ancient Greece.

Nils Weber, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut, “Venice, Malta, Beirut: Medical Thinking and Architectural Strategies in Early Modern Mediterranean Worlds.”

Abstracts: The question of how the discipline of art history can contribute to the study of historic pandemics has gained new significance with the rise of COVID-19. This paper addresses this issue by following a line of inquiry connected to a peculiar phenomenon that exists due to the particularities of Mediterranean topography: the practice of using islands in the Mediterranean Sea for quarantine purposes. Islands and peninsulas in Venice—where the origin of this practice lies—along with those in Malta and Beirut, will be analyzed with regard to the political contexts, local building traditions, and the question of how the post-pandemic architectural heritage can be preserved today.

Jennifer Ballantine Perera, University of Gibraltar & Gibraltar Garrison Library, “The Overlaid Past: The Politics of Space and Memory in Gibraltar’s ‘Doubling’ Street Naming Principle.”

Abstracts: In 2022, a red street sign was placed alongside the official sign, Library Ramp. However, the red street sign name bore a different name, El Balili, a colloquial street name in use up till the late 1970s, but as with all other colloquial street names, it had never before appeared on a public sign. The reason for this invisibility was because these names only ever existed in the imagination of Gibraltarians. Seeing both street names occupy the same space on Library Ramp seems disconcerting, and whilst the red street signs are intended as a move towards cultural recovery, questions are raised given the doubling created in the process. The signs are also disembodied from their historical context. This presentation aims at interrogating the origins of these names, tracing their evolution from the 18th century to the mid-20th. Understanding the terms under which this highly codified naming principle was generated and maintained over such a long period of time is relevant in respect to their recent resurgence.

5B. The Politics of Resistance and Resilience

Chair: Celine Dauverd, University of Colorado Boulder

Rebecca Wartell, Earlham College, “Resistance and Resilience: Portuguese Conversas in Ancona in the mid-Sixteenth Century.”

Abstracts: Portuguese Jewish merchants in the port of the Papal State enjoyed prosperity and religious freedom in the mid-sixteenth century until a drastic shift coincided with the new papacy of Paul IV in 1555. The fiasco that ensued included the arrest of over 100 Anconitano conversos by the Inquisition, including dozens of women who staged a resistance to the unfounded accusations laid against them for the crime of judaizing. Between prison escapes and international trade boycotts, both rabbinic and church documents reveal the efforts these conversa women took to protect their lives and livelihoods in the face of religious persecution and economic extortion. This paper will consider Hebrew responsa and recently discovered materials from the Inquisition records held at Ravenna to offer new perspectives on the 1556 Ancona affair.

Celine Dauverd, University of Colorado Boulder, “The Inquisition and the Jews of Malaga in the 16th - 17th c.”

Abstracts: What happened to the Jewish population who spoke Arabic and lived like Muslims when Catholic Monarchs Isabel and Ferdinand of Trastámara conquered the port city of Málaga in 1487? The sovereigns fervently endorsed the prosecution of alleged false converts through the Inquisition. Records from the Holy Office shows that most Jews were prosecuted based not on the Catholic Church’s investigation but on the denunciation of familiares of the Inquisition. Joaquin Gil Sanjuan and Isabel Pérez de Colosia have researched the Jewish community of the 1500s through inquisition records. Scrutinizing these records alongside the missives from the monarchs’ cartas capitulares, the accounts of the corregidores, and the city appeals from town members, this paper examines how normative methods of jurisprudence were not applied in the case of Málaga. Investigating inquisitional visits, the role of familiares, expenses generated

during trials, the control over book import, the handful of Auto da Fé, and the relationship with the Muslim community, this research reveals that for 200 years, the Inquisitorial mechanism defied religious belonging.

Elizabeth A. Terry-Roisin, Florida International University, “Jesuits, Empire, and Morisco Self Fashioning in Early Modern Spain.”

Abstracts: In this paper, building on my new book, *Morisco Knights in Renaissance Spain: The Granada Venegas Family in History and Memory* (Manchester University Press, 2026), I will describe the ways that Jesuits like Francisco Suárez were particularly helpful to Moriscos like the Granada Venegas family who were seeking to be accepted into the Spanish nobility and who engaged in military service to show their loyalty to the Spanish crown. These relationships aided in Morisco self-fashioning. In addition, I will reflect on the role Jesuits played in Spanish imperial politics and ambitions, whether in Spain itself or across the world in Japan, and on the ways, they understood the nature of their calling. Jesuits were unique in taking that final vow, being willing to be sent anywhere in the world in service to the Catholic Church, which had a particular meaning in the age of early modern empire building.

5C. Economic and Cross-Cultural Interactions

Chair: Alexandru Balas, State University of New York at Cortland

Zeynep Arslan-Çalık, Independent Researcher, “Waves of Connection: Ottoman Mobility and Intercommunal Circulations across Mediterranean Spaces in the Extended Early Nineteenth Century Period.”

Abstracts: This paper investigates Ottoman mobility and socio-economic networks across the Mediterranean during the long turn of the nineteenth century, drawing on a newly compiled dataset from Viennese archival registers (1823–1825) documenting thousands of individuals between 1772 and 1826. Although originally created for Habsburg administrative purposes, the registers reveal Ottoman actors such as merchants, dragomans, consuls, officials, soldiers, and travelers circulating widely across the Aegean, Eastern Mediterranean, North African ports, and inland territories, linking Mediterranean hinterlands to cities such as London, St. Petersburg, and eastern Anatolia. These movements extended the reach of Mediterranean interactions far beyond maritime routes, encompassing diverse continental regions and political entities, and demonstrating how the Mediterranean functioned as a densely interconnected space whose influence penetrated deep into inland territories. The study highlights how mobility facilitated cross-cultural encounters among multiple religious and ethnic groups—including Muslims, Christians, Jews, and other communities—while supporting overlapping commercial, diplomatic, and informal networks. By situating Ottoman actors within these transregional circuits, the paper demonstrates how mobility shaped political, economic, and intercommunal dynamics, presenting the Mediterranean as an arena of exchange, negotiation, and entangled relations that transcends simple coastal and ethno-religious boundaries.

Haralambos Symeonidis, University of Kentucky, “Sephardic Jews of Thessalonica: Peaceful Coexistence in a Multicultural Society?”

Abstracts: This paper examines the history of the Sephardic Jewish community of Thessalonica from its establishment in the late fifteenth century to its destruction during the Second World War, questioning the notion of “peaceful coexistence” in a multicultural society. Following the expulsion of the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula, Thessalonica emerged as a major Sephardic center within the Ottoman Empire, reaching a demographic, economic, and cultural peak in the sixteenth century. The study traces the community’s central role in trade, textile production, and intellectual life, while emphasizing that Ottoman policies toward minorities were driven less by tolerance than by imperial pragmatism. Subsequent centuries reveal a gradual decline shaped by economic change, shifting power relations, and the rise of nation-states in the Balkans. The incorporation of Thessalonica into the Greek state and, ultimately, the Nazi deportations of 1943 marked the end of a centuries-old community. The paper argues that coexistence in Thessalonica was contingent on political and economic interests rather than enduring intercommunal harmony.

Alexandru Balas, State University of New York at Cortland, “Romanian Travelers in the Eastern Mediterranean (1775-1939).”

Abstracts: Romanian travelers have been going to the Eastern Mediterranean for centuries, as this whole region was part of the same Ottoman Empire until Romania’s independence in 1877. I am interested in finding out how different or similar these travelers found the Eastern Mediterranean as compared to “home” at a time when Romanians were portraying themselves as closer to Paris than to Greece or Constantinople. These travelers went to Constantinople, Greece and its islands, Palestine, Egypt, and the Balkans (Macedonia, Albania, the Dalmatian Coast). The trips were made for various reasons: political, business, leisure, visits to holy sites (Mount Athos or Jerusalem), and ethnographic trips to study ethnic groups related to Romanians in the Balkans (Aromanians, etc). 60% of the Romanian travelogues (250 books) in the Bracewell and Drace-Francis “Bibliography of Eastern European Travel Writing” (2008), are about the Eastern Mediterranean. This study presents findings from an analysis of these travelogues.

Onn Winckler, University of Haifa, “A Decade to the ‘Saudi Vision 2030’: A Balance of Achievements and Failures.”

Abstracts: Since mid-2014, with the end of the “second oil decade” (2004-2014), oil prices plunged sharply from over 100\$ per barrel in mid-2014 to less than 30\$ in early 2016. This sharp price decline -- unlike previous steep declines in oil prices which were all the result of severe economic crises (such as at the end of 1998 and the beginning of 1999 in light of the East Asian economic crisis), or due to market flooding, as occurred in mid-1986 and again following the “Oil-for-Food Agreement” between Iraq and the UN (1996) -- resulted from the sharp increase in oil produced from oil shale in US using advanced technologies.

The entry of this “new oil” into the market was believed by the GCC leaders, researchers and international financial institutions, would transform oil from a classic rentier commodity (a raw material that is scarce worldwide and therefore priced according to its use value rather than its production cost) into a regular essential basic commodity, such as grains, whose prices are determined according to their production cost.

Consequently, Saudi Arabia -- the world's largest oil exporter -- like the other GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries, immediately adopted a long-term economic development plan aimed first and foremost at "weaning" it off its dependence on oil export revenues: The "Saudi Vision 2030."

The purpose of this proposed lecture is to examine the extent of the success of this plan a decade after its adoption. What has been achieved thus far? Has the share of oil export revenues of the total Saudi government revenues indeed declined, and if so, by how much? What are the other sources of revenues of the Saudi government, if any? Have the extensive industrialization programs under Vision 2030 been implemented, and if so, in which sectors? Has the share of nationals employed in the private sector out of total national labor force increased? Has the participation rate of the young Saudi women in the labor force risen in light of the removal of previous restrictions -- most notably the lifting of the driving ban and the prohibition on gender mixing in workplaces? And above all, despite the relatively low oil prices since mid-2023, has the Saudi government managed to maintain positive and sustainable GDP growth, well above the national population growth rate, without increasing public debt?

5D. Performances Spaces

Chair: Scott Juall, University of North Carolina Wilmington

Maryrica Lottman, Retired, "A Sense of Place in Cervantes's Captivity Play *Los Baños de Argel*"

Abstracts: At the end of **Los baños de Argel** (1615), Cervantes reminds the audience that Algiers contains landmarks testifying to the truthfulness of his tale. A sense of physical space and of landscape gives breadth, depth, and width to the play's captivity theme. Cervantes uses landscape symbolically to point up moral failings and to reiterate the promise of spiritual salvation and physical release from captivity. Moreover, he creates an epic atmosphere by dramatizing travel over great distances. His theatrical landscape is both real and unreal. He emphasizes the geographic reality of the setting, but the idealized climax of his play-within-a-play contains a mirage of sea and clouds that prophesizes a Christian invasion of Algiers. Metatheatrical elements and allusions to landscape heighten audience awareness of the physical spaces in the theater and underscore the playgoers' own freedom of movement and their potential to aid the contemporary captives in Algiers.

Wesley Doucette, CUNY: Graduate Center, "The Dârülbedâyi: Instituting Turkish in Pera."

Abstracts: This paper examines the Dârülbedâyi, the first state-supported performance institution of the late Ottoman Empire. I argue that it served two intertwined functions: to yetiştirmek (cultivate) emergent Turkishness, and to provide a Turkish-language cultural alternative within the cosmopolitan neighborhood of Pera. Conceptualizing theatre as heterotopia, I show how the institution centralized Ottoman-Turkish language through administrative and organizational practices. This project is complicated by the influence of French director André Antoine, who was invited by Ottoman administrators to establish the theatre. Drawing on archival research in Paris and Istanbul, I address the challenges of exploring an institution that operated at the intersection of European influence, emergent Turkish nationalism, and Mediterranean cultural

networks. The paper illuminates the tensions found in pre-Republican Turkism and demonstrates how performance mediated national identity, cosmopolitan urban space, and the transregional artistic ecosystem in late Ottoman Istanbul.

Natalie Messika, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, “Screens, Stages, and Streets: How Women Rewrote the Cultural Geography of the Mediterranean (1900–1930).”

Abstracts: This paper examines the transformation of built and cultural spaces in Mediterranean coastal cities of the Middle East and North Africa in the early twentieth century through the emergence of women on theatrical stages, in song, and in early cinematic representations. It explores how female performers, educators, and urban entrepreneurs redefined theaters, cafés chantants, recording studios, and early film venues as arenas of cultural negotiation. Their growing public visibility challenged traditional gender boundaries and reshaped spatial practices within late Ottoman and colonial urban reforms. The presentation will include examples of films produced during this period, demonstrating how cinema functioned as a new architectural and cultural space in which female modernity was staged and circulated across the Mediterranean. Drawing on urban history, gender studies, and cultural geography, the paper positions women not as passive beneficiaries of modernization but as central agents in the making of modern Mediterranean urban culture and memory.

Lunch Break: 13:30 - 15:00

Session 6: 15:00 - 17:00

6A. Institutions, Infrastructure, and Society in Early Modern and Contemporary Southern Italy Chair: Filippo Villari, University of Messina

Marilisa Morrone, University of Campania, “Coastal Fondaci in the Kingdom of Naples (16th–17th Centuries): Architecture, Functions and Defensive Structures.”

Abstract: During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the coasts of the Kingdom of Naples were characterised by a widespread network of buildings referred to in the sources as fondaci, devoted to the storage, management and control of goods. Located in port areas or near minor landing places, these structures functioned as key nodes connecting maritime trade routes, territorial economies, and the fiscal and administrative apparatus of the viceregal state. In the same period, intensified corsair activity contributed to the shaping of a militarised coastal landscape, marked by a dense system of defensive structures.

This paper investigates coastal fondaci in the Kingdom of Naples with particular attention to the Calabrian coastline, focusing on minor Ionian harbours such as Roccella, Gioiosa and Gerace—sites still scarcely examined from an architectural perspective. A central aim is to analyse the spatial and functional relationship between fondaci and nearby coastal defensive structures, interpreting their proximity as evidence of integrated infrastructures linking exchange, surveillance, protection and coastal control.

Adopting an integrated approach that combines normative texts, archival documentation, cadastral and cartographic sources with architectural analysis and the study of material remains, the paper examines the architectural features, spatial organisation and multifunctional role of coastal *fondaci* (storage, brokerage, oversight, and occasionally lodging). The analysis highlights both shared typological traits and significant local variations, shaped by the hierarchy of landing places, the scale of maritime traffic and their embedding within defensive systems. By framing *fondaci* as key components of early modern coastal landscapes, the contribution reassesses their architectural and territorial significance and sheds new light on the interaction between architecture, economy and security in the vice-regal Mediterranean.

Vincenzo Naymo, University of Messina, “Feudal Lords at Sea: Privateering, Royal Licenses, and Institutional Mediation in the Kingdom of Naples (16th–17th Centuries).”

Abstract: Between the 1530s and the late seventeenth century, a number of feudal lords of the Kingdom of Naples actively took part in corsair warfare against the Ottoman Mediterranean, arming and equipping galleys, feluccas, and other vessels at their own expense after obtaining royal privateering licenses (*patenti di corsa*). This paper examines the phenomenon as a form of institutionally regulated private warfare, highlighting the role of feudal elites as crucial—yet often overlooked—actors in early modern Mediterranean conflicts.

Moving beyond interpretations of privateering as either a professional maritime practice or a simple extension of royal power at sea, the analysis proposes to understand it as a social practice that was institutionalized yet individually driven, rooted in lordship and in the control of territorial resources. By cross-examining documentation from the chanceries of the Kingdom of Naples with previously unexploited notarial and baronial archival materials, the paper shows how some feudal lords—especially along the Calabrian coast—did not merely arm vessels, but also established small-scale shipyards dedicated to the construction and maintenance of galleys and other craft. These infrastructures required local labor, technical expertise, material resources (timber, pitch, iron), and credit networks, embedding maritime warfare within the social and economic fabric of feudal territories.

Royal privateering licenses emerge not as mere formal requirements, but as negotiated mechanisms that allowed the Crown to delegate the use of force while maintaining instruments of control, thereby transforming feudal initiative into one of the integrated components of a long-term imperial strategy characteristic of the Spanish imperial system. In this perspective, these “feudal privateers” can be understood as institutional mediators, linking local power, coastal communities, and trans-Mediterranean theaters of conflict, information, and exchange, while at the same time consolidating prestige, authority, and access to circuits of service and reward.

Arianna Adorno, University of Messina, “Sacralising the City: Relics, Devotion, and Power in Early Modern Messina.”

Abstract: This paper aims to analyse the role and significance of relics in early modern Messina. The city emerges as a strategic Mediterranean hub, marked by the intense circulation of people, devotional practices, and cultural models. Contemporary sources depict the city as a highly sacralised space, extraordinarily rich in relics, which were central to the construction of its urban identity. Through an integrated analysis of chronicles, hagiographic texts, and ecclesiastical

documentation, the paper reconstructs the image of a “religious” Messina, where relics were widely distributed across the city’s main churches and functioned as central instruments of collective devotion. They also contributed to the symbolic and institutional prestige of the sites that housed them. While some relics conformed to models and typologies widely circulated throughout the Western Christian World since Late Antiquity, reflecting the city’s participation in a shared religious imaginary, others emerged from specifically local dynamics. Closely intertwined with the city’s civil and political history, these relics claimed ancient and prestigious genealogies, fuelled conflicts and symbolic competition, and contributed to the construction of distinctive urban identities, often in dialogue with those of the principal Sicilian cities.

The analysis proposes to consider relics not merely as objects of worship, but as instruments of cultural and political mediation, capable of producing memory and fostering enduring ritual practices. To this end, the paper examines several emblematic case studies using an interdisciplinary approach that combines social and political history with the study of devotional practices.

Vittorio Lorenzo Tumeo, University of Messina, “Foreign Consulates in the Central Mediterranean: Mapping Institutional Presence in Messina during the First Half of the 20th Century.”

Abstract: This paper examines the presence of foreign consulates in Messina within the broader framework of the Central Mediterranean during the first half of the twentieth century, considering consular institutions as key indicators of political, economic, and diplomatic interconnections across the region. Through a systematic mapping of consular offices, their functions, and their evolution over time, the study seeks to reconstruct the networks of state representation operating at the urban level while situating Messina within wider Mediterranean institutional dynamics. The study will be conducted through a historical-institutional methodology based primarily on official records preserved in the State Archives. It encompasses a wide range of countries – more than 40 – thereby allowing for a comparative perspective on consular representation and institutional presence in the urban and Mediterranean context.

6B. Refugee Settlements and Communities

Chair: Maryrica Lottman, Rutgers University

Mary D’Ambrosio, Rutgers University, “A DARING ESCAPE: Pining to Reach the West, Six Siblings Fled the Remote Albanian Labor Camp Where They’d Been Confined. Their Mad Act Brought Down the State.”

Abstracts: The six Albanian brothers and sisters knew they were risking their lives. But what did they have to lose, Maria Popa would later argue, but that hopeless life they were living? Kept under surveillance in a remote peasant village by Albania’s Stalinist government, the once-aristocratic Popa family spent years obsessively plotting their escape. Electrified fences surrounded the country and attempts to flee were punishable by death. But after living for 18

years in a mud hut, where they'd aged from energetic youth to bitter but still-determined middle age, the siblings were determined to try.

The Popas were pursuing a powerful survival strategy Albanians had used for a half millennium, driven by the coincidence of Albania's strategic position on the Adriatic shore, and a population too weak to defend a nation there.

But this obscure family's desperate 1985 gambit would also soon trigger the collapse of Europe's last Communist state.

Yoshiki Sato, Doshisha University, "Refugee Settlement and Regime Security in Interwar Greece: The Idionymon in Greek Macedonia."

Abstracts: After the 1923 Greco–Turkish population exchange, roughly 1.2 million refugees entered Greece and many were settled in Greek Macedonia, where the state pursued “Hellenization” in a contested borderland. This paper examines how refugee settlement, intercommunal frictions with Slavic-speaking residents, and security anxieties shaped the enactment and use of Law 4229/1929 (“Idionymon”). I argue that, beyond suppressing communism and secessionism, the law functioned as a regime-security tool rooted in the legacy of the National Schism: selective policing and prosecutions disciplined oppositional networks and redrew political boundaries, with unintended effects on KKE mobilization. Using process tracing and subnational comparison across Macedonian localities, I triangulate parliamentary debates and the law's text with administrative correspondence on security, settlement, and education, contemporary press and party publications, and indicators of enforcement and electoral change. The paper highlights a mechanism linking liberal nation-building to authoritarian drift in interwar Greece.

Majid Hannoum, University of Kansas, "The Dead and The Missing; Or on the Economy of Morality Across the Mediterranean Sea."

Abstracts: One of the most salient characteristics of contemporary African migration to Europe is the large number of deaths that NGOs document as statistics every day. The bodies of young migrants from the African continent are publicly reduced to numbers. In 2024 alone, the death toll was reported as 10,000 fatalities. While it is important to analyze the significance of these numbers and explain how some deaths can only be accounted for in terms of numbers (not names, images, or histories), it is equally important to show that the declared dead in the sea are merely part of a larger, more tragic, and more gruesome story. There are fatalities that remain invisible, and others that are neither visible nor invisible, neither confirmed nor even known, they are the missing. This paper examines the issue of the missing through a specific incident that occurred on June 24, 2022, when Spanish and Moroccan police intercepted around 1,700 migrants attempting to cross into Melilla, the Spanish-controlled city in northern Morocco, at the border with Nador. The case of the missing not only highlights the inequality of human lives (and deaths) but, more tragically, that some deaths are considered insignificant. The paper will demonstrate how the issue of the missing should be analyzed alongside the cases of the dead and the living, that is, those who continue to attempt the crossing. Since the missing are invisible and obviously cannot speak—nor even communicate through their deceased bodies—I examine the stories of those for whom the missing are still alive: their families, who, no matter how much

time has passed, still hold on to the belief that there is hope their loved ones will one day reappear.

6C. Migration and Integration

Chair: Jean-Luc Richard, University of Rennes

Jean-Luc Richard, University of Rennes, “Greece as a Temporal or Final Country of Residence for Non-European Immigrants Who Entered in the European Union Via Greece: A Field and Statistical Survey 2022-2026.”

Abstracts: This communication will present the results of a Field and statistical survey realized in Greece mainly between 2022 and 2026. Research objective: to analyze how initial intentions, representations (opinions about Greece and about the Greeks), the consequences of barriers and obstacles (discrimination, persecution), but also opportunities, possibly along with life events (meetings, relationships, birth of a child), contribute to whether or not Greece becomes the location of a possible future, of actual settlement in the country. This will be achieved through interviews, analysis of individual trajectories, statistical trends, and observation of policy actors. Greece is a crucial step for migrants (BATHAÏE, 2009). The survey consists in interviewing non-European migrants in various regions of Greece (in Aegean Islands at the doors of refugees’ camps, in the Athens Area, in Thessaly, Macedonia, Thrace and in the Cyclades Islands). The paper will discuss methodological dimensions in Migrations Studies and will take various social sciences academic writings in different languages (English, French, Greek: Kiprianos, Pandelis, Stathis Balias, and Vaggelis Passas. "Greek policy towards immigration and immigrants." *Social Policy & Administration* 37.2; PAPAÏLIAS Th Παπαηλίας, Θεόδωρος, Μετανάστες από και προς την Ελλάδα. 1950-2022, Μπατσιούλας Ν. & Σ., Αθήνα, 2022 ; RICHARD JL 2024).

Paul M Chandler, University of Hawaii, “The Portuguese Presence in Hawaii: From Sugarcane to Cuisine to Music and Literature.”

Abstracts: The history of Portuguese immigration to Hawai‘i can help re-envision and re-interpret the cultural diversity of Hawaii through the Portuguese’s participation in whaling, sugarcane, music, cuisine, and literature. The evolution of Portuguese cultural traditions in Hawai‘i from the 19th to 21st centuries will be examined through a holistic exploration of the traditions from Portugal, Madeira and the Azores that became integrated into Hawaiian society. This paper describes how these traditions developed, evolved, were recast, and became integrated into local identity. This integration came through a variety of cultural expressions: music and dance (chamarrita, fado), festivals and religious events (Holy Ghost Parade, Domingas), culinary specialties (malassadas, lingüiça) and even literature (Cabral, Coito, Felix). Currently the Portuguese communities on several of the Hawaiian Islands are working to strengthen the Portuguese cultural presence because it has waned over the decades due to the extended mixing of the population and the general lack of contact with the Portuguese diaspora due to geographic isolation.

Yitzhak Reiter, Al-Qasemy College, “Flexible Islamism in Israel – The Muftis’ Rulings of the Two Islamic Movements in Israel on Interest-Bearing Transactions.”

Abstracts: In my lecture I analyze the legal rulings (fatwas) issued by the muftis of the two Islamic movements operating in Israel concerning the conduct of interest-bearing transactions, such as taking out a mortgage, bank loans, and stock-exchange investments, under the reality of a Muslim minority living in a Jewish state with a Western culture in which no Islamic banks operate. How do the muftis of the Islamic Movement, in its two branches, deal with this issue? To what extent are the solutions they propose similar to the jurisprudence of Muslim minorities (fiqh al-aqalliyyāt), and in what ways do they differ from it? In their rulings, the muftis are required to define the status of the Muslim minority in Israel and the geo-political definition of Israel in accordance with the classical doctrine of the laws of war and peace in Islam, as well as the degree of Islamic legal legitimacy attributed to the State of Israel. The findings are intriguing and raise further questions.

6D. The Life Cycle of Mobile Minorities in the Early Modern Mediterranean

Chair: Tamsin Prideaux, Leiden University

Marina Inì, La Sapienza University of Rome, “Death on the Move: Mobile Minorities and the Moment of Burial in Early Modern Italy.”

Abstract: The paper examines the moment of burial of different religious minorities on the move in early modern Italy. The restrictions imposed by Catholic canon law complicated this delicate moment of the life cycles of non-Catholic mobile people, from enslaved persons to wealthy University students. The burial of non-Catholics in consecrated ground was strictly forbidden, and they were typically buried outside city walls, in unmarked graves or open fields—reflecting their perceived impurity and exclusion from the community. Catholic participation in the funeral rituals of other religions was likewise prohibited and persecuted by the Inquisition. The paper analyses different instances in which the burial of non-Catholic mobile people appeared in the archives of the Inquisition across the peninsula between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries. It focuses on tracing the relationship between members of the dominant community, its institutions and minorities while examining issues of inclusion, exclusion, and cross-cultural encounters.

Ana Marinković, University of Zagreb, “The Ecumenical Aspects in Life-Stage Ceremonies of the Greek Minority in Early Modern Dalmatia.”

Abstract: Greek soldiers - marines and the light cavalry (stradioti) - were confirmed as a fundamental pillar of the Venetian army after various Venetian-Ottoman battles. As such, the Venetian government transformed a policy of exclusion into a state-sponsored Greek Orthodox religious infrastructure in the later sixteenth and seventeenth century. The official Venetian policy towards the temporary or settled Orthodox soldiers and refugees in Dalmatia, and the everyday practices of their coexistence with the local Catholic population both reveal certain ecumenical aspects, related to the liturgical reciprocity in the former and the organic overlapping in the latter. This paper analyses selected cases of life-stage ceremonies as performed in the city of Šibenik. Firstly, the coexistence of the Greek and Latin altars in the church of St Julian appointed to the Greek community. Secondly, the participation of both communities in funeral

processions. Finally, the case of a contested marriage between a Greek man and a "Latin" woman.

Petar Strunje, Institute for Art History Cvito Fisković Centre, “Housing the ‘Turk’: Infrastructure for Muslim Mobility in Venetian Lands.

Abstract: Beginning from the second half of the sixteenth century, visiting Muslims, particularly Ottoman merchants, were becoming an increasingly common sight in Venice and its cities of the Stato da Mar. As Muslims were forbidden long-term residency, Venetian authorities implemented the Fondaco system to house them, attempting to regulate their career life-stage – confining the Muslims in urban buildings isolated from the rest of the city but furnished according to Ottoman housing culture(s) and Islamic religious needs. Starting from the well-known Fondaco dei Turchi in Venice, this paper will also analyse other similar and rather unknown buildings along the eastern Adriatic coast, in Zadar, Šibenik, Split, and Herceg Novi. Through a reliance on digital tools and primary sources such as government decrees and merchant supplications, it will reconstruct these built systems for minority mobility and trade, exploring the dialectical concepts of opening and closing, segregation and mobility in the early modern age.

Jennifer McFarland, University of Cambridge, “Old Age and Mobile Lives in Early Modern Venice.”

Abstract: This paper examines the impact of migration on experiences of old age in early modern Venice. Early modern people generally thought about old age as a process divided into at least two stages: an active initial old age, followed by età decrepita, decrepit old age, often thought to begin around 70. Età decrepita was understood as a period of physical and mental decline that affected an individual’s ability to support oneself or others; it was an age stage in which some level of dependence was expected. Drawing from Venetian court testimony given by elderly immigrants from the Mediterranean and beyond, the paper examines how migrant status affected the assistance and care available to the very elderly, and how it could be accessed, in Venice. In so doing, the paper sheds light on the communities that migrants built across their life cycle, and the role of family in providing long-distance support.

Tamsin Prideaux, Leiden University, “Armenians between Worlds: Childhood and Family Ties in a Diverse Mobile Minority.”

Abstract: Armenians were one of the most inherently mobile minorities in the early modern Mediterranean. Family and kinship structures were therefore shaped by this movement, including the life-stage of childhood. How mobility affected childhood and childcare is still little understood in the proliferating historical study of early modern mobility. This paper analyses two recently discovered cases in Venice concerning guardianship, kidnapping, and adoption of Armenian children which shed some light on how mobility affected this crucial life-stage. The cases involve locations across the Armenian diaspora including Constantinople, Malta, Persia, and Venice and are examined alongside extensive documentation concerning Armenian merchants. These cases reflect the complex religious, economic, and social world of a diverse minority which faced religious and geographical division due to their mobile minority status. Whilst the emotional lives of these children remain beyond our reach, this paper opens discussions on how such concerns influenced the experience of mobile families.

Friday, May 29

Session 7: 9:15 -11:15 am

7A. The Convergence of Cultures and Societies

Chair: Gabriela Cerghedeau, Beloit College

Gabriela Cerghedeau, Beloit College, “Intellectual Exchanges Across the Mediterranean: The Quest for (Self) Knowledge in Medieval and Early Modern Spanish Literature.”

Abstracts: This study examines the uniqueness of the Mediterranean intellectual and cross-cultural exchanges, the dynamics of circulation and transfer of knowledge as they are portrayed by the journeys of the main characters in the works of Juan Manuel, María de Zayas, and Lope de Vega. While the concept of travel in pursuit of knowledge has a long tradition, such as travel narratives, this paper focuses on the analysis of specific Spanish medieval and early modern literary texts. It argues that travel is not only a geographical movement, but becomes a venture of discovery, a space of resistance, agency, and autonomy, a lesson on moral rectitude, an example of intellectual curiosity, but most of all, it represents an individual transformative journey in search of (self) knowledge.

Wesley Lummus, Independent Scholar, “Atatürk’s Maoists”: The Proletarian Revolutionaries of Turkey’s Second Republic (1960-1980).”

Abstracts: This article examines left Eurasianism in Turkey, a contemporary political movement seeking to reorient the country’s geopolitics away from the United States and NATO towards “Eurasia.” Tracing left Eurasianism to the Proletarian Revolutionaries of the 1970s, I analyze how this group syncretized Mao Zedong Thought with Kemalism, a synthesis I label “Maoist Kemalism.” Led by Hikmet Kıvılcımlı, the Proletarian Revolutionaries recast Atatürk as a Eurasian revolutionary who, like Mao Zedong, led a successful “national liberation struggle” against western imperialism. Building on Maoist Kemalism’s ideological foundations, I assess how the contemporary iteration of this group, led by Vatan Party secretary Doğu Perinçek, has allied itself with President Erdoğan, particularly after the 2016 coup attempt when Erdoğan used Eurasianists as a counterbalance to his Gülenist rivals in the state.

Kiril Petkov, The University of Wisconsin-River Falls, “Party Ladies: Women, Banquets, and Social Order in Early Modern Venice.”

Abstracts: The history of women and gender in the early modern Mediterranean is a flourishing field as of late and owes much to the research carried out in Venice. In spite of the wide roster of studies however, the public roles of women, especially middle- and upper-class women, remains subject to a cliché: women’s impact on the public order was severely restricted. They were

objects, not subjects of power; they functioned by submitting, defying, and contesting, rather than actively structuring, the social order of which they were a part. This paper seeks to challenge that scholarly paradigm. Scrutinizing case-studies of that quintessential early modern Venetian entertainment, the banquet, it argues that it was an agency venue for women—without whom no banquet could take place—to actively and purposefully define the parameters within which men sorted out their place in the social and power hierarchies of the day, and to determine the outcome of their actions.

Sergio Costola, Southwestern University, “Ferrara as a Mediterranean Hinterland: Text, Technology, and Ceremony at the Este Court.”

Abstract: Recent studies have challenged the limitations of coast-based models of the Mediterranean by emphasizing instead how people and goods moved and interacted through both water and land routes. This paper examines the Este court of Ferrara between the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries through this new lens as a Mediterranean hinterland. Although lacking direct access to the sea, the Este court participated in the Mediterranean system through literary creation, military innovation, and the theatricality of diplomatic relations. By examining the three interconnected domains of Boiardo and Ariosto’s chivalric epics, Alfonso I d’Este’s artillery production, and Lucrezia Borgia’s diplomatic and ceremonial activities, the paper demonstrates how Ferrara emerged as a center that created and disseminated Mediterranean cultural concepts. The Mediterranean world in Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* emerges through his depiction and uttering of foreign worlds. Ariosto, on the other hand, presents *Orlando Furioso* as a story that shows how people and things moved freely through a world transformed by gunpowder warfare. Lastly, Lucrezia Borgia mediated these forces through ritual performance, translating military power into civic ceremonies. The three elements of text, technology, and ceremonies demonstrate how Mediterranean systems expanded past the coastline while inland courts developed the first modern Mediterranean cultural practices.

7B. Crossed Islands: From Meaning to Creation

Chair: Odete Jubilado, University of Évora

Odete Jubilado, University of Évora, “Saramago and Sollers: Writing and Thinking About the World from the Islands of Lanzarote and Ré.”

Abstract: Dans cette communication, nous nous proposons d’esquisser une analyse comparatiste de la représentation de l’île chez José Saramago dans *Cadernos de Lanzarote I* et chez Philippe Sollers dans *Un vrai roman - Mémoires*. Pour ce faire, nous baliserons notre réflexion en deux volets complémentaires : l’île comme laboratoire d’écriture et l’île comme dispositif d’observation du monde à travers l’écriture diaristique. L’écriture diaristique devient ainsi un dispositif critique permettant d’interroger l’actualité culturelle, politique et sociale depuis une position périphérique. L’île devient alors une sorte de laboratoire littéraire d’où l’écrivain observe la société, la culture et l’histoire. Loin d’être un simple cadre géographique, l’insularité constitue dans les deux œuvres choisies une position d’énonciation qui favorise le retrait, l’intensification de la pensée et l’élaboration d’un regard critique sur le monde contemporain.

In this paper, we propose to outline a comparative analysis of the representation of the island in José Saramago's *Cadernos de Lanzarote I* and in Philippe Sollers' *Un vrai roman - Mémoires*. To this end, we will structure our discussion around two complementary themes: the island as a writing laboratory and the island as a device for observing the world through diary writing. Diary writing thus becomes a critical tool for examining cultural, political, and social current events from a peripheral perspective. The island thus becomes a sort of literary laboratory from which the writer observes society, culture, and history. Far from being a mere geographical setting, insularity constitutes, in the two selected works, a position of enunciation that fosters withdrawal, the intensification of thought, and the development of a critical perspective on the contemporary world.

Maria Luísa de Castro Soares, University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, "Myth, Utopia, and Existence: The Metamorphoses of the Island from Homer to Camões and Saramago."

(VIRTUAL)

Abstract: A ilha constitui um motivo recorrente na literatura ocidental, funcionando como espaço simbólico de transição, transformação e revelação. Este estudo propõe uma análise comparativa da ilha na *Odisseia* de Homero, em *Os Lusíadas* de Luís de Camões e em *O Conto da Ilha Desconhecida* de José Saramago. Na epopeia homérica, a ilha de Circe assume caráter heterotópico e ambíguo, expondo a fragilidade humana e a tensão entre razão e instinto. Em Camões, a Ilha dos Amores configura-se como espaço utópico e alegórico, associando-se à recompensa heroica, ao desejo e à harmonia entre natureza e glória. No conto de Saramago, a ilha desconhecida torna-se metáfora da busca existencial do autoconhecimento e da identidade. Apoiado em Foucault, Bachelard, Deleuze e Durand, o estudo evidencia a evolução simbólica da ilha, do espaço mítico ao utópico e existencial, refletindo a transição da aventura épica para a experiência interior e a construção da subjetividade.

The island is a recurring motif in Western literature, symbolizing transition, transformation, and revelation. This study presents a comparative analysis of the island in Homer's *Odyssey*, Luís de Camões' *Os Lusíadas*, and José Saramago's *The Tale of the Unknown Island*. In the Homeric epic, Circe's island functions as a heterotopic and ambiguous space, revealing human fragility and the tension between reason and instinct. In Camões, the Island of Love appears as a utopian and allegorical space, linked to heroic reward, desire, and harmony between nature and glory. In Saramago's tale, the unknown island becomes a metaphor for the existential quest for self-knowledge and identity. Drawing on Foucault, Bachelard, Deleuze, and Durand, the study highlights the symbolic evolution of the island, from mythical to utopian and existential, reflecting the shift from heroic adventure to inner experience and the construction of subjectivity.

Natália Amarante, University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, "Insular Space as a Dramaturgical Device in French and Portuguese Theatre: A Comparative Study of *L'Île des esclaves* by Marivaux and *O Marinheiro* by Fernando Pessoa."

Abstract: À travers une approche comparatiste, cette communication examine la fonction dramaturgique du motif de l'île dans deux œuvres appartenant à des contextes historiques et esthétiques distincts : *L'Île des esclaves* de Marivaux et *O Marinheiro* de Fernando Pessoa. Bien que séparées par près de deux siècles, ces pièces utilisent l'isolement spatial comme un dispositif permettant d'explorer les relations humaines et les interrogations philosophiques. Dans la comédie de Marivaux, l'île constitue un microcosme social où l'inversion des rôles entre maîtres et esclaves permet de mettre en évidence les injustices de la société et de proposer une réflexion morale caractéristique du théâtre des Lumières. À l'inverse, dans le drame statique de Pessoa, l'espace isolé devient un lieu symbolique et introspectif où la parole des personnages donne lieu à une méditation sur le rêve, la réalité et l'identité.

This communication examines the dramaturgical function of the island motif in two works belonging to distinct historical and aesthetic contexts: *L'Île des esclaves* by Marivaux and *O Marinheiro* by Fernando Pessoa. Although separated by nearly two centuries, these plays use spatial isolation as a device to explore human relationships and philosophical questions. In Marivaux's comedy, the island functions as a social microcosm where the inversion of roles between masters and servants highlights societal injustices and promotes moral reflection characteristic of Enlightenment theatre. In contrast, in Pessoa's static drama, the isolated space becomes a symbolic and introspective setting in which the characters' speech facilitates meditation on dreams, reality, and identity.

Through a comparative approach, this study analyzes the function of dramatic space, the structure of dialogues, and the visions of the human condition emerging in both works. The analysis shows that the island motif evolves from a tool of social critique in the eighteenth century to a metaphor for interiority and consciousness in modernist dramaturgy.

Daniela Fonseca, University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, "Literature and Advertising in the Portuguese Islands: Narratives, Identity, and Representation in the Azores and Madeira" (VIRTUAL)

Abstract: Este trabalho propõe analisar a relação entre literatura e publicidade a partir dos arquipélagos dos Açores e da Madeira. Partindo da premissa de que a literatura insular desempenha um papel central na construção simbólica desse território, investiga-se de que forma os discursos publicitários, em particular de âmbito turístico, se apropriam de elementos narrativos, temáticos e estilísticos provenientes da tradição literária.

A análise considera autores como Vitorino Nemésio e Horácio Bento de Gouveia, cujas obras contribuem para a construção de imaginários associados ao isolamento, à relação com o mar e à vivência da insularidade. Propõe-se que a publicidade contemporânea reutiliza essas matrizes literárias através de estratégias de storytelling, linguagem poética, e evocação de paisagens simbólicas, promovendo uma imagem das ilhas que oscila entre a autenticidade e a idealização. Do ponto de vista metodológico, o estudo articula análise textual comparativa entre excertos literários e materiais publicitários (nomeadamente de campanhas turísticas), com enquadramento teórico nos estudos literários, na retórica da imagem e na análise de conteúdo.

This paper proposes to analyse the relationship between literature and advertising through the case of the archipelagos of the Azores and Madeira. Based on the premise that insular literature plays a central role in the symbolic construction of these territories, it examines how advertising discourses—particularly in the field of tourism—appropriate narrative, thematic, and stylistic elements drawn from the literary tradition.

The analysis considers authors such as Vitorino Nemésio and Horácio Bento de Gouveia, whose works contribute to the construction of imaginaries associated with isolation, the relationship with the sea, and the experience of insularity. It is argued that contemporary advertising reuses these literary matrices through storytelling strategies, poetic language, and the evocation of symbolic landscapes, promoting an image of the islands that oscillates between authenticity and idealisation.

From a methodological perspective, the study combines comparative textual analysis of literary excerpts and advertising materials (namely tourism campaigns), framed within literary studies, visual rhetoric, and content analysis. It seeks to understand the extent to which advertising simplifies, transforms, or reinterprets the complexity of literary representation, thereby contributing to the construction of a territorial identity designed to appeal to tourism campaigns in the region.

7C. Preservation and Tourism

Chair: Antonino Crisà, Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University

Yaron Jørgen Balslev, University of Stavanger, “Modern Waste History in the British Eastern Mediterranean.”

Abstracts: A century ago, Britain was a dominant power in the Eastern Mediterranean. It ruled Egypt, Palestine, and Cyprus and established a network of connections among these territories. This paper focuses on these connections by examining the British Empire's influence on urban waste treatment in the Eastern Mediterranean during the 1920s to 1940s. During these years, cities underwent urbanization and modernization processes, leading to increased waste production and the emergence of sanitary hazards in urban areas. Municipalities and governmental officials sought efficient, sanitary, and economical waste treatment methods. This study highlights the role of British officials in fostering knowledge migration and creating connections to address urban waste challenges between Jerusalem, Cairo, Suez, Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Nicosia. Following the British occupation of Lebanon in WWII, these connections expanded to include Beirut. Along with the British network, the study highlights the roots of modern waste treatment practices in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Niki Oikonomaki and Ilias Gotsikas, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, “Rock-cut Inscriptions in the Archaic Aegean. Digitization and Preservation.”

Abstracts: This study examines Archaic rupestal graffiti and inscriptions from multiple Aegean contexts. Continuing fieldwork on both islands and mainland has yielded notable new material, particularly from Attica, Thera, and Crete, dating to the earliest phase of the alphabetic writing in Greece. Largely private inscriptions, these texts illuminate everyday practices beyond formal

literary or official epigraphic sources and challenge the assumption that literacy was limited to the polis or to an aristocratic, sympotic elite. Their striking thematic breadth (pilgrimage and dedicatory inscriptions, erotic messages, name tags, and graffiti of every kind) opens perspectives that literature scarcely records. Given that these in-situ monuments are immovable and exposed to weather, the risk of irreversible loss is acute; meaningful study and conservation therefore require comprehensive digital capture. An experimental workflow applied at Kavo Sidero (Crete) combines four complementary techniques: high-resolution 2D photography, Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI), laser scanning, and GIS georeferencing. Their integration produces a precise, high-quality digital surrogate enabling fine-grained analysis and long-term preservation.

Antonino Crisà, Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University, “Art and Heritage at Risk: Safeguarding the Metopes of Selinunte in War Context (Palermo, 1943).”

Abstracts: World War 2 (WW2) caused much death and destruction of monuments in Italy, particularly in Sicily. Therefore, the island can be considered an essential example to better comprehend how the conflict impacted on its substantial cultural heritage.

My paper aims to outline a peculiar case study concerning the successful intervention of Jole Bovio Marconi (1897-1986), curator of Palermo’s Museum, in safeguarding the well-known Archaic metopes of Selinunte. They were transferred from Palermo to a safe shelter in a very dangerous war context in April 1943. First, I outline the events of WW2 in Sicily to better contextualize the project in its historical framework. Second, I evaluated a set of records and newly-founded pictures to reconstruct the events faithfully. Last but not least, I offer conclusive remarks on the role of local authorities in safeguarding museum collections and the importance of social networks acting in a state of war.

Simge Çil, Istanbul Bilgi University, “Traces of Antiquity in Collective Memory: Narrative of the Ancient City at Side.”

Abstracts: In this study, the transformation of collective memory in both the urban fabric and the architecture of Side, a classical site in Turkey, will be examined. As a settlement where ancient and contemporary layers coexist, Side offers a case for understanding the relationship between memory, space, and urban identity. Drawing on Maurice Halbwachs’s theory of collective memory and Christine Boyer’s concept of the city as a cultural text, this study analyzes the spatial form of the city and the changing meanings of the theatre, bath complex, and Temple of Apollo. Data from archival research and interviews will be represented through layer mappings and visual narrative sequences, serving as interpretive tools. These representations will illustrate how the local community reinterprets the ancient city in the context of tourism, modernization, and preservation. Ultimately, the analyses reveal how spatial layers transform physically and symbolically over time, reconstructing collective memory through lived urban experience.

7D. The Mediterranean Stage

Chair: Felipe E. Rojas, West Liberty University

Felipe E. Rojas, West Liberty University, “Se acaba / la gran fábula de Orfeo [?]”: Ekphrasis and Ellipsis in Antonio de Solís’ Comedia de Eurídice y Orfeo (1681).”

Abstracts: Antonio de Solís' *Comedia de Euridice y Orfeo*, one of two plays of the same name written by the playwright, presents a compelling interplay between ekphrasis and ellipsis, utilizing visual imagery to both reveal and obscure elements of the Orpheus myth. A crucial moment in the play features a fallen picture of Eurydice alongside a depiction of her sleeping form, inviting the spectator to engage with the visual absence and presence of the heroine. These moments of ekphrasis serve as narrative devices that propel the myth forward while simultaneously withholding certain aspects of the story. The *comedia*'s ending, which deviates from Ovid's canonical version, further reinforces this strategy of omission, leaving the reader or spectator to reconstruct the expected trajectory of the myth through ekphrastic engagement. In doing so, Solís employs imagery as both an aesthetic and structural tool, subtly guiding interpretation while concealing an alternative conclusion—one that hints at a same-sex resolution. This study argues that the use of ekphrasis in *Comedia de Euridice y Orfeo* not only enhances its dramatic and poetic qualities but also functions as a mechanism for both narrative continuity and deliberate obfuscation, allowing Solís to navigate the constraints of his time.

Lynn Purkey, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, "Tradition, Innovation, and Humor in Teatro de Urgencia."

Abstracts: Russian political and cultural tendencies had a great impact on agitprop theater in Spain during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), which advocated for theater with a social message. However, Spanish theater also had indigenous antecedents, namely Miguel de Cervantes, who revolutionized the *género chico* with the advent of short comical plays or *entremeses*, which were often centered on social issues. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that playwrights like Rafael Dieste should refashion a Cervantine *entremés* during the Civil War. His *Nuevo Retablo de las maravillas* (1936) follows Cervantes's model in several ways, including its one-act structure and posture of social criticism. At the same time, the work drew inspiration from Russian theater. This paper traces tendencies in Dieste's play with Cervantes's *farse* and Soviet agitprop, with particular attention to the use of humor in service of ideology.

Gabriela Currie, University of Minnesota, "From Silence into Sound: Untangling the Mediterranean 'Mocking of Christ'."

Abstracts: A great variety of participants populate the "Mocking of Christ" scene across the Mediterranean space—from the Iberian Peninsula to the Balkans via Thessaloniki, and from Germanic to Fatimid lands—from the 11th to the 14th century. These participants include soldiers, worshippers, mimes, and dancers, all centered around the red-robed Christ flanked by players of often changing musical instruments. These iconographic reworkings make the "Mocking" scene a remarkable example of iconographic paradigmatic continuity and boundless sonic and kinetic variability.

As this presentation will demonstrate, the scene's gradual internal modifications—from silent, static worshippers and soldiers to noisy, dynamic wind and percussion instrumentalists and long-sleeved dancers—correlate with the massive political and military shifts and realignments that characterized the interconnected Christian, Fatimid, and early Ottoman Mediterranean worlds. Furthermore, these modifications also correlate with the emergence of wider entanglements with the visual and sonic cultures of the Caucasus and beyond.

Coffee Break: 11:15 - 11:30

Session 8: 11:30 - 13:30

8A. Material and Visual Culture

Chair: Kathy Marzilli Miraglia, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

James Gilroy, University of Denver, “Zola's L'OEuvre: An (Auto)biography?” (VIRTUAL)

Abstracts: Emile Zola's novel L'OEuvre depicts the pursuit of perfection by an early Impressionist painter who goes mad before achieving recognition for his prodigious talent. The protagonist, Claude Lantier, son of Gervaise Macquart, was inspired by Zola's old schoolmate in Aix-en-Provence, Paul Cézanne. Zola's portrayal of Cézanne as insane led to an understandable break in their lifelong friendship. There were, however, irrational tendencies in the personality and artistic works of the real Cézanne in the 1860s and 70s before he settled down to the pre-Cubist style that became his signature. Zola was thus not exaggerating all that much in his description of the young Cézanne even if he omitted the painter's mature development. L'OEuvre is also something of an autobiography. Claude's friend, Pierre Sandoz, a budding author who achieves the success that eludes Claude, is an accurate self-portrait of Zola himself. Sandoz manages to keep his wits as he pursues grandiose literary ambitions comparable to Claude's in painting. Their frequent reminiscences of their adolescence in the South of France, their dreams and aspirations, are closely based on the real lives of the author and the painter.

Rachel Getz Salomon, University of Haifa, “Mediterranean Textile Craft and Material Culture as Generators of New Design Languages in Design.”

Abstracts: Traditional Mediterranean textile craft practices—such as weaving, embroidery, and natural dyeing—have long played a central role in shaping the material cultures of the region. This paper explores how these practices function today as active sources for the generation of new design languages within contemporary design contexts. Rather than approaching craft as a static heritage, the study examines its reinterpretation as a dynamic material system through which questions of form, texture, process, and meaning are negotiated. Drawing on design-based case studies developed within the Mediterranean basin, the paper traces how textile craft knowledge is translated and reconfigured through hybrid methodologies that combine material traditions with sustainable thinking and technological tools. The analysis demonstrates how Mediterranean textile craft operates as a critical framework for engaging with material culture, enabling designers to articulate new visual and material vocabularies rooted in locality while addressing contemporary design challenges.

Kathy Marzilli Miraglia, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, “Contemporary Master Painter and Iconographer in the Byzantine Tradition.”

Abstracts: George Kordis, based in Athens, Greece, stands as a leading contemporary figure in Orthodox visual theology, seamlessly integrating modern and classical approaches while balancing tradition and innovation. This paper analyzes the theological, aesthetic, and

philosophical basis of Kordis's art, focusing on his theories and painting methods. Kordis places particular emphasis on a dynamic interpretation of form, movement, color, light, and line to achieve rhythm and energy within his compositions. His contributions to iconography extend across various facets of ecclesiastical art, including church frescoes, and portable icons, in addition to significant involvement with personal works of secular and mythological themes. Kordis's technique is unique, merging technological advancement in material use with long-established Byzantine imagery that has been recognized for centuries in Hellenic regions. A scholar, theologian, author, and visionary, he has played a pivotal role in reimagining Byzantine principles within a postmodern context, always demonstrating his distinctive artistic perspective.

8B. Cross Cultural Exchanges

Chair: Gabriela Cerghedean, Beloit College

Elisa Vermiglio, University for Foreigners Dante Alighieri of Reggio Calabria,

“Influences and contaminations in the Medieval Mediterranean: Arab- Norman Sicily.”
(VIRTUAL)

Abstracts: This paper aims to analyze the dynamics of cultural exchange in Arab-Norman Sicily between the 11th and 13th centuries, placing them within the broader context of the medieval Mediterranean. Through the study of the testimonies of geographers and travelers such as Ibn Ḥawqal, al-Idrīsī, and Ibn Jubayr, the work highlights how the island was perceived as a space of intersection between different worlds, where Islamic, Latin and Byzantine elements coexisted and mutually influenced each other.

Through the intercultural aspects emerging from the Arab narrative sources collected in the Biblioteca arabo-sicula by Michele Amari, the paper will focus on the innovations introduced by Arab domination on the island (which would then be spread across the sea throughout the Mediterranean), such as new farming techniques and the reorganization of agriculture via the introduction of new crops and eating habits; in addition, the paper will look at the Islamic influence in the Norman-Swabian age, which has significantly shaped the identity of the land, leading to contamination with the Latin element in different areas of material and immaterial culture.

Nato Akhalaia, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Morphosyntactic Models of the Active Voice in the Laz Language

Abstracts: The Laz language belongs to the South Caucasian (Kartvelian) language family. It is primarily spoken in Turkey. Structurally, Laz is similar to other Kartvelian languages with identical morphosyntactic structures. However, it also manifests new structures influenced by contact with Turkish, reflecting the effects of this external language. As a high-quality agglutinative language, Laz allows the verb to express several grammatical categories, including grammatical voice. The study of the preset author focuses on the morphosyntactic analysis of the active voice. In constructions of the active voice, functional markers representing grammatical roles (S < ag, DO < p) appear in the verb and modify its paradigm.

The subject (S) is marked by the theme marker, the characteristic vowel prefix O (< a), and the S3.PRS marker (-s). Accordingly, Laz has two main Kartvelian morphological models:

1. R-ATM
2. CV-R-(u)-ATM

Additionally, it is highlighted an earlier model that developed later:

3. MSD+AUX

The subject of the active voice is consistently ergative, meaning that with active voice verbs, the subject always appears in the nominative case. However, later periods manifest changes: in the Artashen dialect the subject appears fully in the nominative case, and in Atin one - the subject appears partially in the same case.

Dorit Gottesfeld, Bar Ilan University and Ronen Yitzhak, Western Galilee College, “From Cooperation to Popular Opposition: The Rise of Anti-Israeli Expressions in Jordan’s Education and Culture following the 1994 Jordanian–Israeli Peace Treaty.”

Abstracts: The peace treaty signed between Israel and Jordan in October 1994 was initially accompanied by widespread public support within Jordanian society, which regarded it as a key element in promoting Jordan’s economic prosperity. This support, however, declined sharply following the failure of the Barak–Arafat negotiations at Camp David in July 2000. Since then, opposition to normalization with Israel has intensified across all segments of Jordanian society. Thus, despite the growing security, intelligence, and economic cooperation between the two countries since 2000—including increased water supplies from Israel to Jordan and Jordan’s complete dependence on Israel for the supply of natural gas, both for the Jordanian electricity company and for phosphate plants in the Dead Sea region—public opinion in Jordan has become increasingly opposed to normalization with Israel. This opposition, it should be emphasized, intensified significantly following the outbreak of the Hamas-Israel war in October 2023.

The shift in public opinion is clearly reflected in Jordan’s education and culture. The proposed lecture will illustrate this by highlighting the growing presence of anti-Israeli expressions in the media, textbooks, and literary works in the period following the 1994 peace treaty.

8C. Musical Variations in the Mediterranean

Chair: Jesús-David Jerez-Gómez, California State University

Alicia Valoti, Central Michigan University, “Ferdinando Giorgetti's ‘Viola Method’: Firenze, String Pedagogy and Michaelangelo.”

Abstracts: The Florentine Cavaliere Ferdinando Giorgetti (1796-1867) enjoyed a prestigious career as a young and brilliant violinist before succumbing to a neuropathy that rendered him paralyzed from the waist down. Due to his unfortunate limitations in mobility, Giorgetti was confined to the city of Florence, where he exchanged his dazzling violin performances for music composition and string pedagogy at the Conservatory of Florence.

Named later as the first viola professor of this institution, Giorgetti was instrumental in developing standardized technique and understanding of the less popular viola. His “Metodo per viola”, written in 1854, provides a historical context of the viola’s resurfacing in Italy. It establishes a baseline for position, posture and beginning performance practice for the viola. Yet, the “Metodo” also offers a crash course in virtuosic playing, Giorgetti’s invented terminology, and a wonderful connection to both Italian geography and Michaelangelo’s “Schiavi” statues.

Richard M. Breaux, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, “Digitizing the Stories and Early Recorded Sounds of Arabic-Speaking Musicians in the United States, 1910-1950.”

Abstracts: A digital humanities archive, I created Midwest Mahjar as a public history blog to preserve the sacred and secular music of Ottoman and former Ottoman musicians who recorded on phonograph records in the United States between 1910 and 1950. This paper explores Midwest Mahjar’s work to document and digitize the stories, biographies, and recorded music of Arabic-speaking immigrants. Drawing from primary sources, government documents, city directories, and phonograph records, this site details the lives of often multi-lingual musicians who performed in Arabic and settled in the United States. The site uncovers new territory adding depth, detail, complexity, and context to the stories of these talented immigrants who were largely known only in name, if at all. It now serves as a reference for researchers, family members, record enthusiasts, and scholars interested in the ways immigrants from Mediterranean countries thrived, failed, survived, and struggled to maintain certain cultural traditions.

Scott Juall, University of North Carolina Wilmington, “Representations of Undocumented Mediterranean Migrations in West African Song and Music Videos: Amadou and Mariam’s ‘Sénégal Fast Food’ and DJ Snake’s Remix of ‘Sabali’.”

Abstracts: In 2004, the Malian duo Amadou & Mariam released “Sénégal Fast Food” as part of their critically acclaimed album *Dimanche à Bamako*. This song is a highlight of the album, weaving together multiple political themes regarding the historical and contemporary plight of West Africans. These themes include the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, France’s colonization of West Africa, the postcolonial condition in Senegal, obstacles to legally obtaining migration papers, and the perils of undocumented West African migrations across the Mediterranean following the Central Mediterranean Route. The music video enhances the song’s political message with even greater impact, as we see the principal figures, a newlywed couple, planning the husband’s imminent departure for France, his undocumented migration across the Sahara Desert to Tunisia, crossing of the Mediterranean, and eventual arrival in Paris, which ends in his arrest and his presumed detention in the Mesnil-Amélot Administrative Retention Center and deportation back to his West African homeland.

Twenty years later, DJ Snake, a renowned French disk jockey, remixed another hit by Amadou and Mariam titled “Sabali” (“Patience”) that echoes many of the same themes that arise in “Sénégal Fast Food,” but on a much more dramatic scale. Rather than creating a conventional music video, DJ Snake produced a highly polished 12-minute short film that stars the celebrated Franco-Senegalese actor Omar Sy and addresses a currently debated issue surrounding the clandestine Mediterranean journeys of West African migrants along the Western Mediterranean Route. This short film, which takes place between Bamako, Mali and Ceuta, an autonomous

Spanish city on the Mediterranean coast north of Morocco, traces the migration of a male figure who also leaves his wife behind, migrates across the Sahara Desert, and is captured by Spanish authorities and detained in the Ceuta Reception Center. At the conclusion of the short film, while he and countless other West Africa migrants are attempting to escape from their detention, they are assassinated, and the repatriation of their corpses remains uncertain.

In my paper, I analyze both the lyric and visual narrative strategies in Amadou Mariam's & Mariam's "Sénégal Fast Food" and DJ Snake's remix—and revision—of the Malian duo's "Sabali" to explore the controversial aspects of representations of Mediterranean Migrations among undocumented West Africans. My study analyzes how both works aim to raise an awareness of these migrations, urging audiences to view the struggles of undocumented migrants through a humanitarian lens.

Jesús-David Jerez-Gómez, California State University, "Galeas": Morisco letters and a Sephardic ballad in the context of Mediterranean slavery and diaspora."

Abstracts: Among various petitions addressed to the Spanish monarch, two letters found in the Archive of Simancas concerning the year of 1630, reveal the dramatic reality and human catastrophe of the expulsion of the Spanish Moriscos. Among appeals to collect overdue salaries to pay the ransom of family members, soldiers' and sailors' captive in Barbary, we find two no less moving petitions that reflect the reality of the Spanish Moors, the Moriscos, who only a few decades earlier had been expelled from Spain back in 1609 and 1612. These letters echo a Sephardic ballad, "Galeas, mis galeas", reflecting that slavery affected also the Spanish Jews who had suffered the much earlier diaspora of 1492. These letters that vividly contextualize slavery in the Mediterranean find literary expression in Sephardic folklore as shown in the ballad addressed in this paper, capturing the human tragedy experienced by minorities across time in their own voice.

8D. Travel Writing and Texts

Chair: Bernardo Piciche, Commonwealth University

Ina Habermann, University of Basel, Switzerland, "Sunbathing on the Hills of Arcady: Cultural Mythmaking and the British Mediterranean."

Abstracts: For centuries, the Mediterranean played a vital part in Britain's political and geo-strategic power play that had global repercussions as well. At the same time, Southern Europe and the Mediterranean conjured a whirl of aesthetic and cultural associations related to the importance of classical learning in English higher education, to visions of political liberalism, to trade, consumption and cultural mythmaking, and increasingly related to the pleasures of a warm climate and an escape from the tyrannies of British social convention. Literature and the arts as well as tourism and travel writing testify to the irresistible lure of the 'warm South'. In my talk I will outline British Mediterranean mythmaking with an emphasis on Greece, from the Romantic hellenism of poets such as Lord Byron, John Keats and Oscar Wilde to popular twentieth-century travel writings such as those of the iconic Durrell family.

Katerina Papazacharia, Lecturer in Diplomatic History and International Relations, "Cyprus during the Early Years of the Greek War of Independence in 19th-century Travel Texts."

Abstracts: The proposed paper attempts to examine everyday life on the island of Cyprus during the pre-war of Greek independence years and during the first years of the Greek war of independence of 1821 through the pen of travelers who found themselves on Cyprus during that era.

The presentation will focus on the edited texts of European travelers who visited Cyprus in the early 19th century (British, French, Spanish, Italian) and who inform us on the economic and administrative situation that prevailed on the island. Focus is placed on the records that they deliver to us regarding the state of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus, the impressions of travelers on Archbishop Kyprianos and his predecessor (Archbishop Chrysanthos), relations between Muslim and Christian inhabitants, as well as conditions which prevailed on the island after the execution of Kyprianos.

Bernardo Piciche, Commonwealth University, “Travelers in Early Modern Naples.”

Abstracts: A loquacious English gentleman and a discreet creole visited Naples in early modern time. Fynes Moryson (1566-1630) produced a rich narrative of his brief sojourn in the city, nurtured by erudite taste. Luis Geronimo de Oré (1554-1630) a Peruvian-born Franciscan theologian, missionary, essayist, and musicologist produced no personal account of his stay. For both, though, Naples might have meant something more than the official purpose of the visit. In the most populous city of the enemy empire, the English “urbane traveler” was probably a spy. De Oré ended by teaching theology, published a liturgic text that was pivotal for the knowledge of some pre-Colombian languages. Moreover, he might have seen the striking similarities between the Mediterranean metropolis and his native land, as confirmation of his belief in the introduction of polyphony in missionary liturgy for the Amerindians.

Panagiotis Karanikas, National and Kapodistrian University, “Pulsato Notae Redduntur Ab Aethere Uoces (Rut. Nam. 1.203): Coastal Descriptions of Rome and Mediterranean in Ovid’s Exilic Poetry and In Rutilius Namatianus.”

Abstracts: This paper traces the literary geography of exile and return in Ovid’s *Tristia* (particularly poems 1.2, 1.4, 1.10, and 1.11) and Rutilius Namatianus’ *De reditu suo*. Ovid’s journey eastward to the barbaric land of the Getae in Tomis—cast as a reversal of Aeneas’ westward voyage from Troy to Italy—marks a descent into cultural and political alienation. Four centuries later, Rutilius charts a westward return to his native Gaul, now ironically threatened by the same Getae. Though their destinations differ, both poets begin their journeys in Rome, a city whose meaning and memory are contested and reimagined in their respective narratives. This paper focuses on the coastal imagery and maritime landscapes that frame these journeys, exploring how Rutilius receives and reconfigures Ovidian motifs of exile, sea travel, and the Mediterranean as a space of both loss and identity.