

SMM 2019 Conference Barcelona Panel Proposal (smm.bcn.2019@imf.csic.es)

Title: Movement, Mobility and Mediterranean Culture

Sponsors:

The Mediterranean Seminar (www.mediterraneanseminar.org)

The CU Mediterranean Studies Group (www.cumediterranean.info)

Organizers

Brian A. Catlos – Professor: Religious Studies, CU Boulder

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Sharon Kinoshita – Professor: Literature, University of California Santa Cruz

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Chair: Sharon Kinoshita

Comment: Brian Catlos & the audience

Papers:

- “Mobility and Exchange in the Satellite Residences of the Royal Parklands in Norman Sicily”

Dana Katz – Post-doctoral Fellow: Geography, Hebrew University

dana.katz@mail.utoronto.edu

- “Common Points of the Medieval Mediterranean Culture: An Approach from the Application of the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to the Study of the Artistic Exchanges”

María Marcos Cobaleda – Assistant Professor: Art History, Universidad de Málaga

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- “The Travel of Cultures in Late Medieval Mediterranean Epics”

Uri Shachar – Assistant Professor: History, Ben-Gurion University (urisha@bgu.ac.il)

Language: English (questions can be asked in Spanish)

Overview:

The medieval Mediterranean was a dynamic zone of cultural contact, exchange, and innovation, the nexus between Europe, Africa, and Asia, and between the Byzantine, Latin, and Islamic worlds. In recent years, some scholars have written in terms of “Mediterranean culture” — a set of common traits, practices, beliefs, and aesthetics shared by the various peoples around its shores; other scholars, however, have rejected this notion in favor of the Mediterranean as a region defined not by any single religious, linguistic, or institutional culture. The three papers in this panel approach the question of Mediterranean culture and the role played by inter- and intra-regional exchange from three distinct, but complimentary approaches. Dana Katz examines the palace-gardens of the Norman kings of Sicily as exemplars of a culture that bridges the Islamicate and Latin Mediterranean. María Marcos Cobaleda demonstrates, through the case of Almoravid art and architecture, how GIS technology can be applied to the trace artistic influences in the medieval Mediterranean. Finally, Uri Shacher shows how a Judeo-Middle High German travel text fits into the tradition of Mediterranean epic and travelogue. Together these three papers illuminate the notion of medieval Mediterranean culture, and demonstrate through the lens of distinct methodological and disciplinary approaches how this culture can be discerned.

Paper 1

Presenter: Dana Katz – Post-doctoral Fellow: Geography, Hebrew University
(dana.katz@mail.utoronto.edu)

Title: Mobility and Exchange in the Satellite Residences of the Royal Parklands in Norman Sicily

Abstract:

The royal park palaces that surrounded the Norman capital of Palermo were born out of Mediterranean exchange. At these sites, itinerant poets from across *dar al-Islam* composed and presumably performed texts, of which several remain extant, carved in stone and stucco that once adorned their façades. Sophisticated hydraulic and passive air cooling technologies were implemented for the royal palaces. Built entirely in an Islamic mode, these secular sites unequivocally demonstrated an architecture of power shared across the Mediterranean. Despite the apparent mobility of builders, artisans, and architectural ideas, the local Muslim population of Sicily became increasingly marginalized over the course of the twelfth century. The paper will also explore a further scale of exchange, from the interregional to the intraregional, and how this came to play in the parkland architecture of the Norman kings of Sicily.

Short CV attached

Paper 2

Presenter: María Marcos Cobaleda– Assistant Professor: Art History, Universidad de Málaga (mmcobaleda@uma.es)

Title: Common Points of the Medieval Mediterranean Culture: An Approach from the Application of the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to the Study of the Artistic Exchanges

Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to present the results of the ArtMedGIS Project. The main objective of this Project is to evaluate the artistic exchanges in the Mediterranean during the late Middle Ages through the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) in order to assess some common points of the medieval Mediterranean culture. The starting point has been the selection of certain elements of the Islamic art, developed by the Almoravids in the 12th century, which can be related to other Mediterranean artistic manifestations due to commercial, political and cultural relations. In this context, the objectives of the project are: to measure the presence of these elements in the main artistic manifestations of the Islamic and Christian Mediterranean countries in the late Middle Ages; to apply the new method based on the GIS to the Art History research; to assess the relation of religion and power with the artistic productions; and to review the concepts of centre and peripheries regarding the artistic production in the Mediterranean context. Beyond the geographical distribution, the use of the GIS has allowed to analyse different phenomena linked to the artistic exchanges and the development of the Mediterranean culture.

Short CV attached

Paper 3**Presenter:** Uri Shachar– Assistant Professor: History, Ben-Gurion University (urisha@bgu.ac.il)**Title:** The Travel of Cultures in Late Medieval Mediterranean Epics**Abstract:**

The sole copy of *Dukus Horant*, an epic in Judeo-Middle High German, was discovered in the Cairo Genizah in the late nineteenth century. While the literary tradition from which this work grows is central European, material evidence shows conclusively that the codex was manufactured in the East. The manuscript inscribes the flight of a German speaking Jewish community to Jerusalem in the wake of the Black Death riots, but at the same time it thematizes the travel of culture and language across the Mediterranean. The story, in other words, chronicles the eastbound travel of the song that its protagonist is imagined to perform, but it also traces the passage of the conditions that made the reading of the codex intelligible in the Levant. A courtly epic in Hebrew script that was copied onto paper in the eastern Mediterranean disrupts the kind of territorial assumptions that still inform much of the scholarship on pre-modern literature. By reading *Dukus Horant* alongside other contemporaneous epics such as *Sirat Baybars*, *Sirat Sayf ibn dhi Yakzan*, and *Melusine*, this talk seeks to reevaluate the hermeneutical work of the Mediterranean in producing self-reflective narratives that topicalize the fabrication and travel of medieval idioms.

Short CV attached