

International Conference

A Decolonial Mediterranean?

Disparities, Imaginations, Power Relations

5 – 7 November 2024

This international conference aims to explore diverse perspectives on the Mediterranean region, examining the associated practices and power relations from a decolonial perspective. It critically examines the legacies of European colonialism in the states surrounding this maritime space, while also addressing divisions and the marginalization of voices not directly connected to European colonialism. The conference contrasts the imperial age with contemporary history and politics, aiming to highlight disparities not only between these periods but also among the different actors, discourses, and practices shaping the region.

Organizers

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**Bibliothèque Nationale de Tunisie,
Salle Taher Haddad**
1008, Boulevard du 9 Avril 1938, Tunis.



International Conference

A Decolonial Mediterranean? Disparities, Imaginations, Power Relations

5-7 November 2024 / Tunis, Tunisia

Location

The MECAM International Conference, titled "A Decolonial Mediterranean? Disparities, Imaginations, Power Relations," will take place at the National Library of Tunisia (1008, Boulevard du 9 Avril 1938, Tunis).

Abstract

Is the Mediterranean a dead concept - or does it still have potential for dialogue among equal partners, as Mohammad Arkoun argued. The international conference "A Decolonial Mediterranean? Disparities, Imaginations, Power Relations" invites scholars in the humanities and social sciences from the north, south, east or west of the Mediterranean to explore the question of a decolonial Mediterranean from the viewpoint of Tunis and the Maghreb, and through the five interrelated 'Interdisciplinary Research Fields' that constitute the research agenda of the Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb (MECAM): Aesthetics & Cultural Practice, Inequality & Mobility, Memory & Justice, Resources & Sustainability, and Identities & Beliefs. Following Walter Dignolo and others, decoloniality is understood as an epistemological project of "undoing and redoing". We therefore would like to discuss the colonial conditions and legacies of the western-European invention and intervention of and in the Mediterranean in relation to alternative de- and postcolonial imaginations, practices and relations of a Mediterranean region, space or concept.

The Mediterranean region as a natural and cultural entity is an "imagined geography" (Edward Said) and in particular a western-European invention that contributed to the colonisation of the Maghreb, and other regions of the world, to the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and other dynasties or states. Since the age of decolonisation after World War II, the regions in the south or east of the Mediterranean have been increasingly influenced by processes, ideas, and stakeholders from other (non-Western-European) regions, such as the USA and the USSR, or the postcolonial Arab, African or Asian states and movements during the period of the Cold War, and more recently by states like China, Russia, the Gulf states or Turkey. Geopolitical considerations will be addressed and linked to questions of representations, mobilities,



connectivities, and disparities of and in the Mediterranean that emerged in colonial, postcolonial or recent times. The conference will contrast the imperial age (1800-1950) and contemporary history and politics in order to address the relations and disparities between time periods and spatial imaginations, but also between different actors and their discourses and practices.

By “decolonizing the Mediterranean” (Proglio 2017), the conference aims at critically investigating the legacies of European colonialism in the subsequent states around this maritime space and at addressing different or complementary representations of the Mediterranean within the Maghreb or other regions of the world, such as the interconnections between “White”, “Red” and “Black” Sea, put forward by intellectuals and politicians of the Ottoman Empire, or other spatial imaginations, historical legacies, ideas and practices, that order, divide and connect space, time or societies such as the desert, the rivers, the languages, or cultural and aesthetic practices.

Overall organization & coordination on site:

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The Programme

Day 1 Tuesday, November 5, 2024

Venue : Bibliothèque Nationale de Tunisie (Salle Taher Haddad) - 1008, Boulevard du 9 Avril 1938, Tunis

9:00 - 9:15	Welcome Address Khaled Kchir, Amel Guizani
9:15 - 9:30	Opening Notes Rachid Ouaisa, Esther Möller, Benjamin Heidrich, Clara-Auguste Süß
9:30 - 11:45	<p>PANEL 1 Representations: Aesthetics and Cultural Practices</p> <p>Presenters:</p> <p>Frickel, Myrian: “Mafia Myths and Mediterranean Realities: A Decolonial Inquiry of Narratives and Practices through the Lens of Mafia Discourse”</p> <p>Natour, Hanan: “Between Maghreb and Mashriq: Resonances of Pre-Modern Concepts of the Mediterranean in Tunisian Arabic Prose of the 21st Century”</p> <p>Eddahbi, Bouchra: “La Méditerranée : de l’espoir avorté à la mort promise dans <i>Cannibales</i> de Mahi Benbine”</p> <p>Chair: Benedikt Stuchtey Discussant: Sanabel Abdel Rahman</p>
12:00 – 13:30	Lunch Break
13:30 – 15:00	<p>PANEL 2 Narratives of Mobility and Inequality</p> <p>Presenters:</p> <p>Bianco, Annamaria: “Displaced from the Future: Migrating Back to Syria in Nesrine Khoury’s Speculative Novel <i>Wādī Qandīl</i>”</p> <p>Chemlal, Said: “Mediterranean Crossings: Rethinking Film Narratives of Illegal Immigration in Matteo Garrone’s <i>Io Capitano</i> (2022)”</p> <p>Chair: Nessim Znaien Discussant: Cyrine Kortas</p>



15:00 – 15:30	Coffee Break
15:30 - 16:30	Recontre Ibn Khaldoun: Keynote Jerbi, Mohamed: “Décolonisation des villes et des écrits sur les villes en Méditerranée méridionale: comment intégrer le passé impensé /oublié ?” Welcoming Words: Clara-Auguste Süß Moderation: Riadh Ben Khalifa

Day 2 Wednesday, November 6, 2024

Venue : Bibliothèque Nationale de Tunisie (Salle Taher Haddad) 1008 - Boulevard du 9 Avril 1938, Tunis

9:00 - 10:30	<p>PANEL 3 Negotiating Governance</p> <p>Presenters:</p> <p>Novaes, Moacyr: “Colonial Mediterranean in Late Antiquity: The Struggle between diverse Language Levels”</p> <p>Wüst, Andreas: “Framing Religious Tolerance for Public Diplomacy – The Monarchy’s Cooption of Morocco’s Jewish Community”</p> <p>Chair: Augustin Jomier Discussant: Imad Alsoos</p>
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee Break
11:00 - 12:30	<p>PANEL 4 The Mediterranean as a Space of Mobility and Inequality (Part I)</p> <p>Presenters:</p> <p>Sezzi, Guilia: “Post-Colonial Disappearance: Including Subaltern Voices to Decolonize the Mediterranean Border Regime”</p> <p>Gannouni, Imene: “The Mediterranean Migration Crisis: Framing Sub-Saharan ‘Irregular’ Migrants in Global and Local News Outlets”</p> <p>Chair: Thomas Serres Discussant: Heidrun Bohnet</p>
12:30 - 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 - 15:30	<p>PANEL 4 The Mediterranean as a Space of Mobility and Inequality (Part II)</p> <p>Presenters:</p> <p>Letsch, Lydia: “Reimagining Security: Colonial and Post-Colonial Legacies in the Maghreb’s Borderlands”</p>



	<p>Okan, Orkun Can: “A Maritime Space of Postwar Reconfigurations: Navigating Empire and the Aftermaths of World War I in the Mediterranean (1918-28)”</p> <p>Chair: Najla Mosbahi Discussant: Charlotte Fiedler</p>
15:30 - 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00 - 17:00	<p>Rencontre Ibn Khaldoun: Keynote</p> <p>Naguib, Rim: “Solidarity against Empire: Revolutionary Paths and Ties across the Mediterranean and Black Sea”</p> <p>Welcoming Words: Clara-Auguste Süß Moderation: Esther Möller</p>
19:30	<p>Dinner at Palais Bayram (only invited guests) 06 Rue des Andalous, Bab Menara, Tunis, Tunisie</p>

Day 3 Thursday, November 7, 2024

Venue : Bibliothèque Nationale de Tunisie (Salle Taher Haddad) - 1008, Boulevard du 9 Avril 1938, Tunis

9:00 – 10:30	<p>PANEL 5 Dealing with Resources and Sustainabilities</p> <p>Presenters:</p> <p>Majidi, Mustapha: “Renewable Energy Projects between the two Shores of the Mediterranean: Cooperation or Domination?”</p> <p>Van Ommeren, Emile: “Class, Sector, and International Food Trade: Patterns of Farmers’ Mobilizations in Tunisia”</p> <p>Chair: Julius Dihstelhoff Discussant: Max Ajl</p>
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee Break
11:00 - 13:15	<p>PANEL 6 Decolonising Concepts of the Mediterranean</p> <p>Presenters:</p> <p>Khalfaoui, Lou: “The Mediterranean as a link or obstacle in postcolonial relations: The genealogy of the Union for the Mediterranean through French and Algerian Official Discourse (1999-2008)”</p> <p>Lafi, Nora: “Decolonising Mediterranean History: Between Deconstruction and Redemption”</p> <p>Kar, Bodhisattva: “The Mediterranean from Afar: Notes on South Asian Figurations”</p> <p>Chair: Georges Khalil Discussant: Muriam Davis</p>
13:15 - 14:45	Lunch Break
14:45 - 15:45	<p>Rencontre Ibn Khaldoun: Keynote</p> <p>Borutta, Manuel: “De/colonizing the French Mediterranean: Algeria, Corsica and Occitania, 1768-1976”</p>



	Welcoming Words: Clara-Auguste Süß Moderation: Rachid Ouaiassa
15:45 - 17:00	Round Table: Décoloniser l'Éducation et le savoir sur la Méditerranée en Tunisie Moderation: Riadh Ben Khalifa
17:00 - 17:30	Closing Notes

Abstracts of Presentations

Displaced from the Future: Migrating Back to Syria in Nesrine Khoury's Speculative Novel *Wādī Qandīl*

Bianco, Annamaria

With the founding of the Schengen area (1995), the Mediterranean Sea has transformed from the 'open sea' postulated by Fernand Braudel (1982) into a 'closed sea', characterised by an unequal mobility system. In relation to this variable geography of movement, I will focus in my paper on the critical function played by speculative writings, presenting the contribution made by contemporary Arab literature to the construction of a renewed Mediterranean space and advocacy for socio-political change. In this framework, I will concentrate mainly on the Syrian case, showing how the prolongation of the war has impacted the imagination of the authors and their hopes of homecoming, leading them to set their novels in often catastrophic futuristic scenarios. As a case study, I will present an analysis of the novel *Wādī Qandīl* (2023) by Nesrine Khoury, whose events take place in the year 2029, when the main character – the former refugee Thoraya - returns to Syria in search of her childhood memories, in order to shape her future.

(De)colonising the French Mediterranean: Algeria, Corsica and Occitania, 1768-1976

Borutta, Manuel

Some currents in postcolonial and decolonial theory tend to replicate and essentialise the binary Europe/non-Europe and to homogenise or demonise modern European colonialism. Against this backdrop, the keynote lecture analyses the (post)colonial interaction and entanglement between Algeria and various parts of southern France, which were referred to as 'Internal colonies' of the nation state before, during and after the (de)colonisation of Algeria. By emphasising the changing political status of 'French Algeria' and focusing on the (anti)Mediterraneanist play of (post)imperial actors with the scales and categories of nation and empire, metropole and colony, the lecture not only illustrates the flexibility of France in dealing with cultural and religious differences, but also the fluid transition between modern empires and nation states that allowed to transpose (anti)colonial discourses and practices from North Africa to Corsica and the south of the hexagon. In view of this fluid transition, however, the question also arises as to what extent the colonial age came to an end in the former French Mediterranean.

Mediterranean Crossings: Rethinking Film Narratives of Illegal Immigration in Matteo Garrone's *Io Capitano* (2022)

Chemlal, Said

This contribution aspires to investigate how Matteo Garrone's film *Io Capitano* (I'm the Captain, 2022) manages to rethink many of the previous Maghrebi and European cinematic narratives about illegal immigration. Garrone succeeds in bringing to the fore the perspective of illegal immigrants, who become the subject, rather than the object, of his camera. They participate in weaving the narrative and (re)narrating their traumatic lived experience; they are given a voice and they can speak. The analysis will be carried out from a postcolonial approach, with the aim of proving how it attempts to subvert and decolonize the previous migrant film narratives.

La Méditerranée : de l'espoir avorté à la mort promise dans *Cannibales* de Mahi Benbine

Eddahbi, Bouchra

Dans cet article, nous nous intéressons aux représentations de l'espace maritime dans son rapport avec la problématique de la migration clandestine dans le roman *Cannibales* de l'écrivaine franco-marocain Mahi Benbine. A la lumière de l'approche postcoloniale, nous tenterons d'explicitier les liens étroits existant entre l'expérience migratoire comme phénomène social alarmant et l'espace maritime, lequel espace s'inscrit « dans la symbolique de L'anthropophagie».

Mafia Myths and Mediterranean Realities: A Decolonial Inquiry of Narratives and Practices through the Lens of Mafia Discourse

Frickel, Myrian

The paper explores the transformative potential of decolonial approaches in the Mediterranean, focusing on the mafia discourse in Sicily. Based on archival work, participant observation and interviews in Sicily since 2016, the case study explores local knowledge through participatory methods. The analysis establishes a link between the mafia discourse and the political-economic context of the region, epistemic (in)justice and local transformation designs, with a particular interest in counter-archives and situated knowledge.

The Mediterranean Migration Crisis: Framing Sub-Saharan 'Irregular' Migrants in Global and Local News Outlets

Gannouni, Imene

Media coverage of Sub-Saharan migrants crossing the Mediterranean from North Africa to Europe has unveiled the existence of a "Black Mediterranean" (Proglio, 2016), which has not yet been adequately mapped. In this context, this study aims to examine the representation of Sub-Saharan 'irregular' migrants crossing the Mediterranean in a sample of news stories from global and local news outlets: BBC, Tunis Africa Press Agency (TAP), Tunisie Numerique and Inkyfada. The news reports were selected by titles and leads using keywords search such as 'Sub-Saharan', 'irregular', 'illegal', 'migrants' and the 'Mediterranean'. They were collected from February 1 to June 30 2023. This period was chosen because the rising tide of migrant deaths and boat losses in the Mediterranean attracted increased attention in Tunisian and global media in the context of 'Europe migrant crisis'. The method of analysis is discourse analysis based on the analytical categories proposed by Van Dijk (1989, 2000, 2006) and Ruth Wodak (2015). The findings reveal frames of border control, security and humanitarian protection. 'Irregular' migrants are presented in numbers and depicted as an anonymous mass positioned within a security frame. The Mediterranean represents a contact zone in which the asymmetrical power relations and the dynamics of humanitarian protection and border control are depicted.

Décolonisation des villes et des écrits sur les villes en Méditerranée méridionale : comment intégrer le passé impensé /oublié ?

Jerbi, Mohamed

At the heart of the municipalities that manage the cities, there is a particular, unique history, shaped by its inhabitants, its traditions, its natural and political environment and its cultural heritage. These cities have their heroes, legends, movements of glory and their periods of struggle, but also their doubts, their hesitations and even their contradictions. The paper questions how to integrate the communal past into the colonial past and into the future. Why



hide these meetings, these collaborations, these sharings, these conflicts, which were real. Answering these questions allows us to better understand/define what weaves the background fabric of this "colonial fracture". Ignoring these articulations means preventing ourselves from grasping essential dimensions. Should we take into account common and shared legacies in order to establish a serene and responsible partnership? It is important to understand how the phenomena engendered by the colonial fact have continued in cities, transformed and reconfigured. It is simply essential to evoke these colonial legacies lucidly and dispassionately. Municipalities such as Sfax continue to be essential elements of public life, local democracy and sustainable development. This municipality remains a laboratory of social, economic and environmental innovations where citizens can be directly involved in decision-making and the construction of the future of their city in cooperation with the Mediterranean world and the rest of the world. It is an intelligent way to open an exciting door for all, to grow in humanity while respecting singularities and thus contribute to repairing the torn fabric of the world. Each commune is a piece of the puzzle of Tunisian and Mediterranean history, a testament to the resilience, creativity and diversity of the Tunisian/human condition. Tunisian communes, these basic political and administrative entities, constitute the foundation of local life throughout the modern and contemporary periods. Their history is a captivating tale, illustrating the evolution of society, its institutions and its communities in the past and in the future.

The Mediterranean from Afar: Notes on South Asian Figurations
Kar, Bodhisattva

This presentation aims at complicating the idea of "Geography of Emotions" invoked by Gabriele Proglia in his call for "decolonizing the Mediterranean." Focusing primarily on a series of historical and anthropological texts published in South Asia at different points over the nineteenth and early twentieth century which have variously negotiated with the figure of the Mediterranean, it intends to contribute to the conference's object of redefining the discursive frame of the Mediterranean studies. Caught in the embrace of an insecure racial theory, the Mediterranean that emerges in these texts is neither simple-mindedly thalassological nor exclusively European. In fact, this paper's contention is that for a colonized people afar, the Mediterranean became a complex affective site for engaging the thorny question of universality under the sign of colonialism. The various analytical shifts in European metropolitan academe's considerations of the Mediterranean, and their concomitant commands, frequently miss these strange afterlives and alter-worlds of the region. Attending to the complexities of this ghostly centrality of the region in the historiographical imaginary of modern South Asia, this paper wishes to rethink some of the self-certainties of the decolonial programme.

The Mediterranean as a link or obstacle in postcolonial relations: The genealogy of the Union for the Mediterranean through French and Algerian Official Discourse (1999-2008)

Khalfaoui, Lou

In the Algerian Civil War's aftermath, French and Algerian officials made clear attempts to redefine bilateral relations, relying on their "unique" links. Yet, "dissonant memories" over the colonial period have long plagued state relations. In this context, this paper will discuss the origins of the Union for the Mediterranean (UpM), an intergovernmental organization founded in 2008. Through France and Algeria's heyday of reconciliation (1999-2004), the ideological basis of the UpM was laid. In French discourse, the Union relied on supposed "natural", "geographical" and "historical" ties between France and Algeria. However, the UpM project

took a downturn when France adopted the 2005 law casting a positive light on French colonialism, reactivating memories of colonial violence in Algeria and becoming a major obstacle. The immediate and historical backgrounds are often neglected in understanding the project and its “relative failure”, as well as the impact official narratives about colonialism had on its viability.

Decolonising Mediterranean History: Between Deconstruction and Redemption

Lafi, Nora

Taking part in the decolonisation of Mediterranean history means, in many respects, not only critically analysing the successive layers of narratives that have contributed to the constitution of coloniality itself, but also deconstructing the concepts themselves, including that of Mediterranean. For historians, the aim is to decipher how a foundational, and even performative, ambiguity was created within the object itself, so much so that the writing of history served as scaffolding for the colonial edifice. It is also a question of identifying the ontological link between temporalities, geographies, dominations, occupations and the concept of Mediterranean. This inevitably entails a severe process of deconstruction. But it also raises the question of whether the decolonial approach offers a path to redemption for the concept. This is what this paper sets out to examine, from the angle both of an inclusive historiographical approach and of a methodological reflection on the nature of various archival corpuses. The aim is both theoretical, around the question of whether uncovering the biased nature of a concept leads to its inevitable rejection, and practical, in the sense of reflecting on the profession of historian and the process of writing. The hypothesis put forward in this paper as to a possible avenue of redemption stems essentially from the historian's responsibility as an intellectual of the present: in a region still marked not only by intrusive forms of post coloniality, but also, brutally, by colonialism tout-court, persevering in the critical exploration of the concept thus makes it possible to affirm a posture with a performative aim towards a decolonised future.

Reimagining Security: Colonial and Post-Colonial Legacies in the Maghreb's Borderlands

Letsch, Lydia

Security research has been epistemically dominated by military fields of study and policy, prioritizing the interests of powerful global players at the expense of perspectives and experiences of local actors. This phenomenon extends to the Maghreb countries, where security interventions have largely mirrored Western agendas and the interests of former colonial powers. Recent years have witnessed a rise in decolonial and Southern perspectives that challenge these entrenched viewpoints, exposing the limitations and non-universality of Eurocentric concepts and calling for reevaluation of long-standing ideas and concepts in the security field through a decolonial lens. Drawing from fieldwork in the Maghreb's borderlands, the paper highlights vernacular perspectives as a critical methodological tool for reflecting on dominant imaginations, practices, and relations of security in the region. These vernacular geopolitical imaginations challenge conventional historical geographies in the Mediterranean region, highlighting the complex entanglement between center and periphery and between Europe and Non-Europe.

Renewable Energy Projects Between the Two Shores of the Mediterranean: Cooperation or Domination?

Majidi, Mustapha

This research tends to demonstrate the imbalance of power between the North and the South of the Mediterranean by studying the partnerships concluded, the bilateral agreements and the financial provisions of the energy projects currently being executed or operated in the region. The projects currently being implemented or in operation are essentially intended to guarantee sustainable energy for the countries of the North, particularly those of the Mediterranean and the European Union. The cases studied of clean energy projects illustrate how disparities in economic power, technological capacity and governance structures are likely to create unbalanced partnerships and accentuate the domination of the North over the South.

Solidarity against Empire: Revolutionary Paths and Ties across the Mediterranean and Black Sea

Naguib, Rim

In 1907 and again in 1913, the arrest in Alexandria of anarcho-syndicalists and revolutionary socialists—who had escaped tsarist repression, taken refuge and continued their activism among the Black Sea sailors on the south shore of the Mediterranean—prompted massive protests that lasted for several days. I examine the two peculiar instances of mobilization in Alexandria to reflect on the little-known revolutionary paths and ties that linked the Mediterranean and the Black Sea shores, and the ensuing solidarity movement that brought together a large array of ethnicities and social classes, to mobilize against deportation and imperial despotisms. The special position of Alexandria as ‘a colonial bridgehead’, and the multiple and disputed imperial sovereignties in the city, had paradoxically produced a radical internationalist political culture among its residents. However, colonial exceptionalism thwarted both instances of internationalist solidarity and radical anti-authoritarianism, instrumentalizing the Capitulations to control the flow of radical ideas across the seas.

Between Maghreb and Mashriq: Resonances of Pre-Modern Concepts of the Mediterranean in Tunisian Arabic Prose of the 21st Century

Natour, Hanan

This contribution explores imaginations of the Mediterranean in Tunisian Arabic Prose of the 21st century. Inspired by its tendency to reach out to pre-modern historical figures and texts that shaped how the history of the Mediterranean is remembered, the paper finds itself at the nexus of pre-modern travelogues, historiography, and competing temporalities. How does reaching back in time affect the “imagined geography” of Tunisia as part of the Maghreb and the Mediterranean? How do contemporary texts engage with alternative visions of the Mediterranean by revisiting the cultural heritage of Maghrebi figures like Ibn Khaldun? Focusing on Kamel Riahi’s *al-Mishrat: min sirat Khadija wa-ahzaniha* (The Scalpel : The Life and Worries of Khadija, 2006) and Rachida Cherni’s *Taratil li-alamiha* (Hymns to Her Pains, 2011), the paper addresses the long view of what interpretations of the Mediterranean meant in the past, and how remnants of these shape imaginations of it in the present.

Colonial Mediterranean in Late Antiquity: The Struggle between diverse Language Levels

Novaes, Moacyr

Colonial history provides many examples of domination and subordination through language.

But it is also possible to detect criticism and rupture underneath equally colonial operations of silencing. Roman domination in North Africa used highbrow Latin as an important instrument in Late Antiquity. In this scenario, some of Augustine of Hippo's works can be examined as historical testimonies of a philosophical critique of linguistic oppression with regard to knowledge and the transmission of truth. These testimonies point to new philosophical possibilities in contemporary decolonial debates about the subalternity of languages and the possibility of insurgent voices.

A Maritime Space of Postwar Reconfigurations: Navigating Empire and the Aftermaths of World War I in the Mediterranean (1918-28)

Okan, Orkun Can

Within an analytical framework that centers questions of nationality and (restriction of) movement, this paper discusses how a diverse body of social actors navigated circuits of imperial power across the Mediterranean in roughly the decade following World War I. It supports efforts to “decolonize” the Mediterranean by foregrounding the agency of “non- state actors” through archival sources such as petitions and appeals, by problematizing assumptions of rigid divides between state and non-state actors as well. Links of transportation, networks of commerce and family bonds are considered together with violence, displacement and dispossession, through encounters involving not one but multiple empires (especially Ottoman, French and British). Thinking across—and beyond—empires helps to interpret how interactions across the postwar Mediterranean were consequential not only for port cities of “the White Sea” but also for wider hinterlands and interconnected maritime spaces such as those of the Red Sea and the Black Sea.

Post-Colonial Disappearance: Including Subaltern Voices to Decolonize the Mediterranean Border Regime

Sezzi, Guilia

The Mediterranean has increasingly become a space of death and disappearance. European and third- states authorities wield their power through a “necropolitics” that manifests in drifting lifeboats, invisible shipwrecks, and illegal rejections. The sea becomes the main stage for an (aesthetic) regime of dis/appearance, shaped by the logics of a hierarchical racial system that thrives on the existence of unaccounted lives and deaths. Against this background, people on the move (PoM) and their families resist disappearance by enacting a “politics of re/appearance” through individual/collective, on/off- line practices between the realms of the in/visible. Drawing from a three-month-long ethnography conducted in the city of Sfax with sub-Saharan families of disappeared individuals along the Tunisian- Italian route, this contribution seeks to enrich the expanding literature on migration-related disappearance by mapping the various contesting actions that counter this invisible form of border violence, while highlighting subaltern claims of re/appearance by PoM and their affective networks.

Class, Sector, and International Food Trade: Patterns of Farmers' Mobilizations in Tunisia

Van Ommeren, Emile

This paper explores coalition formation among Tunisian farmers, highlighting the historical and economic contexts that have shaped their policy preferences. It argues that the effects of international trade – from the late 19th century to today – have fundamentally changed the nature and structure of agrarian relations. More specifically, the legacy of colonial-capitalism

and neoliberal policies has deepened divisions between export-oriented sectors and those competing with imports, leading to fragmented political mobilization. Through a comparative analysis of four agricultural product categories – wheat, olive oil, barley, and dates – the study reveals that contemporary farmer attitudes are more influenced by sectoral interests than by class affiliations. This research contributes to the broader discourse on the relationship between capitalism and social movements, suggesting that in Tunisia, capitalism may act as a disuniting force rather than fostering solidarity. The findings also shed light on structural disparities that are essential for advancing food security and sovereignty agendas.

Framing Religious Tolerance for Public Diplomacy – The Monarchy’s Cooption of Morocco’s Jewish Community

Wüst, Andreas

Moroccan foreign policies are known to include the propagation of Moroccan Islam as a modern and tolerant counter model to more radical views spread by Saudi Arabia or Iran. Conversely, this contribution shows that religious policies exceed a merely Muslim target group. The kingdom has been investing heavily to enhance the visibility of Morocco’s Jewish heritage – domestically but foremost internationally. While only 2000-3000 Jewish souls permanently live in Morocco nowadays, Jewish communities of Moroccan descent also play a vital role in the monarchy’s foreign policy strategy. This fact gained attention when the USA declared to recognise the kingdom’s claims on Western Sahara in exchange for Morocco’s normalisation of relations with Israel in late 2020. Building upon original interview research and media analysis, this contribution reveals how Morocco carefully backs up its foreign policy activities across the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Sea with cultural policy actions in the Jewish heritage field.

Abstract of the Roundtable

Décoloniser l'Éducation et le savoir sur la Méditerranée en Tunisie

L'école fait partie des principaux acquis de la population tunisienne depuis l'indépendance et constitue une priorité pour l'État. La tunisification de l'éducation s'est accompagnée d'une démocratisation et d'une décolonisation du savoir, avec des manuels scolaires conçus pour répondre aux nouveaux défis socio-économiques de la nation libérée. Malgré les révisions successives des programmes et plusieurs réformes qui n'ont pas été compatibles avec l'évolution de la société, l'actualisation des manuels scolaires est aujourd'hui considérée comme un besoin urgent par des experts, les enseignants et des défenseurs des droits de l'homme. Malgré les déclarations répétées des ministres de l'Éducation sur la nécessité d'engager des réformes, de nombreux obstacles entravent les changements profonds du système éducatif. Les défis actuels, tels que le décrochage scolaire élevé, la violence et la faible employabilité, soulèvent des questions cruciales. Ces dernières années, plusieurs colloques et tables rondes ont été organisés par des universitaires et des organisations de la société civile pour réfléchir à la « crise » de l'École et proposer un nouveau contrat social pour l'éducation, fondé sur les principes des droits de l'homme, de la justice sociale et de la dignité humaine. La création d'un conseil national de l'Éducation (décret n°2-2024 du 16 septembre 2024) pourrait-elle constituer une véritable plateforme de concertation pour sauver une École de plus en plus critiquée ? Soixante-huit ans après l'indépendance, la décolonisation du système éducatif se présente comme un défi majeur. L'examen du système éducatif révèle que la décolonisation du savoir et des pratiques éducatives en Tunisie et dans le bassin méditerranéen reste un défi majeur. Cette responsabilité incombe non seulement aux décideurs, mais aussi aux producteurs du savoir et aux acteurs éducatifs. Les organisateurs de cette table ronde souhaiteraient échanger autour des questions suivantes:

1. Quels sont les moyens et les perspectives de production d'un savoir décolonisé en Tunisie et en Méditerranée et qui reflètent des perspectives locales?
2. Est-il possible d'inclure de s'engager dans la refonte des manuels scolaires avec des perceptions décoloniales ? Cette approche peut-elle favoriser les valeurs citoyennes et l'engagement citoyen ?
3. Dans quelle mesure la Méditerranée constitue-t-elle une composante identitaire pour les Tunisiens?
4. Quel rôle la production d'un savoir et les pratiques éducatives décolonisées peuvent-elles enrichir la conception d'un nouveau contrat social pour l'éducation ?

Nous proposons d'inviter M. Abdelbasset Ben Hassen, président de l'Institut Arabe des Droits de l'Homme, membre de la commission internationale sur le futur de l'éducation (Unesco) pour donner une conférence: Vers un nouveau contrat social pour l'éducation : les initiatives régionales et locales.

Participants

Abdel Rahman, Sanabel

Sanabel Abdel Rahman holds a PhD in Arabic Studies, focusing on magical realism in Palestinian literature, from Philipps-Universität Marburg. She completed her BA and MA at the University of Toronto's Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations. In the academic year 2023/24, she was a EUME Fellow at the Forum Transregionale Studien and is currently a MECAM Postdoctoral Fellow. She writes fiction and essays on arts and culture.

Ajl, Max

Max Ajl is a Senior Fellow at in the Department of Conflict and Development Studies at Ghent University and a researcher with the Tunisian Observatory for Food Sovereignty and the Environment. He is an editor at Agrarian South and Journal of Labor and Society, and has written for Agrarian South, the Journal of Peasant Studies, Globalizations, Review of African Political Economy, Middle East Report, and many other scholarly and popular journals, including the Guardian's Comment is Free, Boston Review, and Monthly Review. He researches climate politics, Tunisian national liberation, agrarian politics in the Arab region, and ecological planning, and Arab-North African intellectual history. He is the author of a recent book, A People's Green New Deal.

Alsoos, Imad

Imad Alsoos earned a bachelor degree in English language and literature and a master degree in international studies from Birzeit University/Palestine, as well as a master degree in public law and international relations from the University of the Basque Country. In 2017, he earned his PhD from the Free University of Berlin, focusing on Hamas's political discourse and organisational mobilisation in Gaza. In 2018, he joined the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. In 2023-24, he joined the Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in the Mghreb. His current research focuses on a comparative study of Muslim thoughts in Mashreq and Maghreb and then examines the way their interactions have influenced the development of Ennahda Party's political thought.

Ben Hassen, Abdelbasset

Abdelbasset Ben Hassen is the President of the Arab Institute for Human Rights. Member of the International committee on the Futures of Education (UNESCO). And vice president of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee. Abdelbasset is also the chairman of the Tunisian National Committee for the support of refugees (2011-2013) and served as a member of the high committee for the realization of the objectives of the revolution, political reform and democratic transition (2011-2012). Currently, he is member of the National Committee for the reform of education in Tunisia. Ben Hassen held the position of Human Rights Programs Director in the MENA Region at Ford Foundation (2005-2011). He has taught Human Rights at the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences in Tunisia, the Institute of Social Sciences at the University of Tunis, and the International Institute for Human Rights in Strasbourg – France. He has written on human rights, human rights education and culture. He was member of the drafting committee of the United Nations World Program on Human Rights Education. Ben Hassen is a trainer on Human Rights and Human Rights education. He is also a writer and poet.

Ben Khalifa, Riadh

Riadh Ben Khalifa is an associate Professor of Contemporary History at the University of Tunis, Vice-Dean, Internship director at the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences (since September 2024), Fellowship of Mecam (from September to April 2024) and member of Research Laboratory of Economy and History of Mediterranean. His is redactor in chief of the Tunisian Review of Social Sciences. The research interests of Riadh Ben Khalifa focus on migration, asylum, mobility in transitional contexts. Over the past decade, he published several books and articles in refereed journals as well as contributed to numerous chapters in collective works. He also made contribution to reports on migration and refugee issues for international organizations. Riadh Ben Khalifa serves as scientific member of the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Right (FTDES), Arab Institute for Human Right and National Migration Observatory (Minister of Social affairs). Additionally, he is a member of several migration networks.

Bianco, Annamaria

Annamaria Bianco is a lecturer of Arabic language and literature at the University of Toulouse Jean-Jaurès and an associate researcher at Aix-Marseille University (IREMAM). She is the author of several studies about the links between Arab cultural production and exile, and has written a PhD thesis entitled “Adab al-malġa’: représenter le refuge dans le roman arabe du XXIe siècle”. Currently being published, this manuscript won her the special mention of the IMOMM Thesis Prize, as well as the AMU Thesis Prize in 2023. She is currently co-editing the following two collective works: Contemporary Arabic Literature and Migration: New Poetics and Perspectives (Bloomsbury, 2025) and Exil et traduction. Regards sur un croisement fécond (Classiques Garnier, 2025). In the Board of the European Association for Modern Arabic Literature Studies (EURAMAL), she is also a member of the French Society for Middle Eastern and Muslim Studies (SEMOMM) and its Italian counterpart (SeSaMO). She is a translator for film, theatre, literary publishing and the press.

Bohnet, Heidrun

Heidrun Bohnet is Associate Professor of Migration and Conflict Research at the University of Continuing Education Krams in Austria and affiliated researcher of the Merian Centre for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb (MECAM) at the University of Tunis. She is currently leading the EU funded project "MixedRivals", which examines the perceptions of threat and inequality between different (forced) migrant groups in North Africa. She holds a Ph.D. in Political Science and International Relations from the University of Geneva, Switzerland. Heidrun Bohnet has led and be involved in various international data collection projects on displacement.

Borutta, Manuel

Manuel Borutta is professor of Modern and Contemporary History at the University of Konstanz where he founded the Mediterranean Platform (since 2019) and directed the DFG sponsored research network ModMed (2018-24). He edited A Colonial Sea: The Mediterranean, 1798-1956 (Routledge 2012, with Sakis Gekas) and Liquid Continent: The Mediterranean of Modernity (V&R 2023, with Fernando Esposito). He is currently finishing a monograph on (post)colonial entanglements between Algeria and France (Wallstein 2025) and is preparing an Oxford Handbook of the Modern Mediterranean (Oxford University Press, with Malte Fuhrmann, Nora Lafi, Esther Möller and Joseph Viscomi).

Chemlal, Said

Said Chemlal is a professor of English and Film Studies at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fez, Morocco. His articles in English have been published in *The Journal of North African Studies*, *Journal of African Cinemas*, and *Studies in European Cinema*.

Davis, Muriam

Muriam Haleh Davis is an Associate Professor of History and the Director of the Center for the Middle East and North Africa at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her first book, *Markets of Civilization: Islam and Racial Capitalism in Algeria*, was published by Duke University Press in 2022. She also co-edited *North Africa and the Making of Europe: Governance, Institutions, and Culture*, which was published by Bloomsbury Press in 2018. She is co-chair of the editorial committee for MERIP (Middle East Research and Information Project) and is co-editor of the Maghreb Page for *Jadaliyya*. She has previously held fellowships at the European University Institute in Florence and the IMéRA in Marseille.

Dihstelhoff, Julius

Dr. Julius Dihstelhoff is responsible for the international joint project, the Merian Center for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb (MECAM), as an academic coordinator (postdoc position) since May 2020. His research work addresses German foreign policy in the MENA region, political transformation processes in Tunisia, and the topics of regional (re)organization and political Islam. He holds a PhD in Political Science from Philipps-Universität Marburg, Germany.

Eddahbi, Bouchra

Bouchra Eddahbi is a teacher-researcher at Chouaïb Doukkali University, Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences of El Jadida (Morocco), where she teaches French Language and Literature. She holds a doctorate in French studies. In 2020 she defended her thesis: *‘L’écriture féminine en question dans le roman francophone d’écrivaines issues de l’immigration africaine: étude sociocritique comparée’*. Her research focuses on French-speaking literature, particularly, on the production of migration writers. She has participated in several conferences and contributed to numerous scientific works, on a national and international scale. Bouchra Eddahbi is also the director of the scientific journal RELI’LART (Repères littéraires langagiers et artistiques).

Fiedler, Charlotte

Charlotte is senior researcher at the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS), a think tank based in Bonn, Germany as well as an affiliated researcher at MECAM, Tunis, for 2024. She received her PhD from the University of Essex in 2019. She engages in research and policy advice on peacebuilding and social cohesion in post-conflict countries as well as political transformation processes and the effectiveness of international support thereto. In Tunisia she studies the country’s political transformation from a multi-level perspective, based on qualitative interviews. Her work spans a variety of methods and has been published in *International Studies Quarterly*, *Political Studies Review* and *International Studies Review*, amongst others.

Frickel, Myrian

Miryam Frickel is a political scientist in Berlin and is doing her doctorate as part of the cluster initiative “ConTrust: Trust in Conflict - Political Coexistence under Conditions of Uncertainty” in the research network Normative Orders at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, Germany. She has worked in an Antimafia organization and in a women's center in Palermo and is politically closely connected to the struggles for asylum and migration in the Mediterranean.

Gannouni Khemiri, Imene

Dr. Imene Gannouni Khemiri holds a doctoral degree in culture and civilisation. She is currently an Assistant Professor in the English Department, Faculty of Arts, Letters and Humanities, University of Manouba, Tunis, Tunisia. She studied for an MA in cultural studies at the University of Manouba and got her Master's degree with a dissertation on the images of Princess Diana in British popular press exploring how media constructs 'femininity.' She was awarded her Ph.D with a dissertation on the construction of Otherness in British travel writing taking Tunisia as a case study (1815-1910). Her research interests include travel writing, migration studies, media studies and visual culture studies. She teaches cultural studies, British History, American history and research methodology. She is the author of “Travelling across Cultures: Reading the Contact Zone in British Travel Accounts of Tunis” In Proceedings of the International Conference, Interdisciplinarity beyond the Divide (2016) and “Pretty as a Picture: Tunisian Landscape in the Travel Narratives of Temple (1835), Playfair (1877), and Ashbee and Graham (1887)” In Journeys: The International Journal of Travel and Travel Writing. (2021). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3167/jys.2021.220106>. She is a member of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and ASTENE (The Association for the Study of Travel in Egypt and the Near East).

Jerbi, Mohamed

Professor of contemporary and present-day history, interested in studying the history of institutions of power in the Maghreb during the colonial era and during the period of national construction.

Jomier, Augustin

Augustin Jomier is an Associate Professor of History at INaLCO (Paris), and a fellow at IRMC-Tunis (2023-2025). His first book, *Islam, réforme et colonisation. Une histoire de l'ibadisme en Algérie (1882-1962)* (Paris, Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2020), explores the issue of Islamic reformism at a local scale, from the Mzab region in Southern Algeria, a French colony at that time. He also studied the history of orientalism in colonial North Africa, through the lens of René Basset's private archives. Current research project includes a social, cultural, and political history of libraries in modern North Africa.

Kar, Bodhisattva

Bodhisattva Kar is Associate Professor in the Department of Historical Studies and the Deputy Dean of Research and Internationalisation in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Cape Town. He has taught and held research fellowships in several premier institutions at Amsterdam, Berlin, Calcutta, Chicago, Delhi, Hamburg, Mexico City, Oxford and Paris. His research interests include histories of disciplines and the social; joint-stock capitalism; primitivism; nineteenth- and twentieth-century history of South and Southeast Asia; modern African intellectual history; connected and comparative histories of frontiers.

Khalifaoui, Lou

After graduating from the University of Cambridge, Lou Khalifaoui went on to complete a Master of Science from the University College London (UCL). Before starting a PhD at the University of Leeds in 2022, she interned and was a research assistant to director of the Institute of Race Relations, an antiracist educational charity based in London. With an interdisciplinary approach resulting from her background in political science and history, her research focuses on the construction of colonial violence in official discourses of the French and Algerian state. Lou analyses speeches, public statements and interviews of state actors to highlight the maintenance and disruption of particular framings. These discourses serve to contextualise contemporary memory focused policies seeking appeasement and 'reconciliation'. Lou also works with civil society actors who organise around the memory of colonial violence, to illustrate the reception of official discourses and their contestation.

Khalil, Georges

Georges Khalil is the managing director of the Berlin-based Forum Transregionale Studien and academic coordinator of its research programme Europe in the Middle East—The Middle East in Europe (EUME). He has been working in the field of academic administration and international scholarly exchange since 1998, studied History, Islamic, and European Studies in Hamburg and Cairo, co-edited *Di/Visions. Kultur und Politik des Nahen Ostens* (2009), *Islamic Art and the Museum. Approaches to Art and Archeology of the Muslim World in the Twenty-First Century* (2012) and *Commitment and Beyond: Reflections on/off the Political in Arabic Literature since the 1940s* (2015). He is a member of the Executive Council of MECAM.

Kortas, Cyrine

Cyrine Kortas is a MECAM long-term fellow (2023-2026). She is an assistant professor of English Literature at the University of Gabes, and a researcher at LAD, a research unit in the Faculty of Arts, Sfax, Tunisia. She was a member of the London Centre for Interdisciplinary Research. Her current research focuses on the influence of modernist English authors such as D. H. Lawrence on the rise of the modern novel in the Maghreb region; it explores the concept of the New Man in a selection of novels published in Tunisia and Morocco while introducing Sufism as a theory of analysis. This project is influenced by one of her publications: *The Image of the New Man in Post-War Short Stories "The Man Who Loved Islands" by D. H. Lawrence and "The White Rose" by Hanna Mina in 2020.*

Lafi, Nora

Nora Lafi (Istres, near Marseille, 1965) is a historian (PhD, 1999; Habilitation, 2011) who specializes in the study of the Ottoman empire and of the societies of the Middle East and North Africa. She works as a Senior Research Fellow at Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin. She has been chairing from 2020 to 2023 the international and collaborative research project HISDEMAB of the Leibniz-Association on the theme of the historicity of democracy in the Arab and Muslim Worlds. She now leads, together with Suaad Al-Ghafal the Ghadames Heritage Project, based at Leibniz Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin and funded by the Gerda Henkel Stiftung. She is also a Privatdozentin at the Freie Universität of Berlin (Graduate School Muslim Culture and Societies). She was in 2020 a Senior Fellow of the Max Weber Kolleg at Erfurt University (Research Group Religion and Urbanity) and in 2023-2024 a Senior Research Fellow at MECAM Tunis. She co-chairs the Cities Compared: Governance, Consultative Mechanisms and Plurality project within the EUME programme (Forum Transregionale

Studien). She co-founded in 1999 H-Mediterranean (H-Net). She edited in 2005 *Municipalités méditerranéennes* (K. Schwarz Verlag). She is co-editing *The Oxford Handbook of the Modern Mediterranean* (OUP). Among her numerous articles: "Mediterranean cosmopolitanism and its contemporary revivals: A critical approach", *New Geographies*, Journal of the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 2013 and "Mediterranean Connections: The Circulation of Municipal Knowledge and Practices during the Ottoman Reforms, c. 1830–1910" in *Another Global City: Historical Explorations into the Transnational Municipal Moment, 1850–2000* (Palgrave 2008).

Letsch, Lydia

Lydia Letsch is a PhD candidate in Transnational Governance, a joint program of the Scuola Normale Superiore and Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies. Her research focuses on security and conflict dynamics, local governance and border communities in North Africa. Drawing on postcolonial and critical approaches to security, her doctoral project examines how local security arrangements emerge and function beyond formal institutions and how they impact communities in remote areas. She holds a BA in International Development and a BA in Anthropology from the University of Vienna and a MA in Peace Research and Security Policy from the University of Hamburg. Before joining Scuola Normale Superiore, she worked in several civil society and peacebuilding initiatives in Tunisia and the Western Balkans, and interned for the Austrian Institute for International Affairs (oiip) and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI).

Majidi, Mustapha

Majidi Mustapha is lecturer-researcher at Hassan I University (Morocco) within the Faculty of Legal and Political Sciences and coordinator of the Political and International Studies program. His research focuses on issues related to sustainable development, energy transition, climate change, and extractivism, with an analytical approach rooted in political science.

Mosbahi, Najla

Najla Mosbahi holds a PHD in English Language and Linguistics. She teaches English at the Military Academy in Tunis. Dr. Mosbahi earned her doctorate in this field, showcasing her profound expertise and commitment to advancing linguistic and media studies. Her research interests encompass a wide range of subjects, including media studies, film studies, critical discourse analysis, multimodality, and applied linguistics. Dr. Mosbahi has contributed significantly to these fields through her published research papers. Notable works include 'A Genre Analysis of the Film *Children of a Lesser God*' and 'Fearless Voices: A Systemic Functional Grammar Examination of Female Resilience in *Halloween*' (1978), which explores themes of female empowerment and resilience through a linguistic lens. In addition to her publications, Dr. Mosbahi is an active participant in both national and international academic conferences, where she shares her insights and collaborates with other researchers.

Möller, Esther

Esther Moeller is the German vice-director of Centre Marc Bloch, a Franco-German Research Center for Social Sciences and Humanities in Berlin, and a visiting professor of History at Humboldt-University Berlin. Previous positions were at Sciences Po Paris, the university of the German Army in Munich and the Leibniz-Institute of European History in Mainz. As a historian of the Arab world in the 20th century, she has worked on different aspects of the relations

between Europe and the MENA-region, in particular colonial education, humanitarian aid and migration. Among her recent publications are “Multiple Mittelmeer-Missionen: Religiöse, wissenschaftliche und humanitäre Begegnungen und Besitznahmen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert” (Multiple Mediterranean Missions: Religious, Scientific and Humanitarian Encounters and Occupations), *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 49/2 (2023), 268-295, and, together with Shaimaa Esmail El-Neklawy, “Between Traditions of Aid and Political Ambitions: Endowments and Humanitarian Associations in Egypt, Late 19th–Mid 20th Century”, *Endowment Studies* 6 (2022), 192-220.

Naguib, Rim

Rim Naguib is a fellow in the program Europe in the Middle East—The Middle East in Europe (EUME), at the Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin, supported by a research grant of the Gerda Henkel Foundation. Her research examines the history of deportation from Egypt, and the related processes of securitization of Egyptian nationality and foreigners’ residence, with a focus on the policing of Jewish and ‘foreign’ internationalists in colonial and post-colonial Egypt.

Natour, Hanan

Hanan Natour is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Cluster of Excellence “Temporal Communities: Doing Literature in a Global Perspective” (Freie Universität Berlin). She obtained her PhD in Arabic and Literary Studies with a thesis on Narratives of Liberation, Emancipation, and Decoloniality in Tunisian Arabic Prose (1987-2017) (Freie Universität Berlin, 2024). Together with Prof Mohamed-Salah Omri (University of Oxford) she co-edits the first English-language volume devoted to the varieties of Modern Tunisian Literatures. Throughout four years of her PhD at the Department of Arabic and the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School of Literary Studies, she served as Research Associate for the ERC-funded project “PalREAD — The Reading and Reception of Palestinian Literature from 1948 to the Present”. Hanan holds an MPhil in Modern Middle Eastern Studies (University of Oxford, 2018) and a BA in Arabic and German Literature (University of Goettingen, 2016), including a year of studying abroad at Université Paris-Sorbonne.

Novaes, Moacyr

Moacyr Novaes, Prof. Dr. at Universidade de São Paulo – Brazil, is a Principal Investigator at Mecila – Maria Sibylla Merian Centre Conviviality-Inequality in Latin America, member of Cepame – Centro de Estudos de Filosofia Patrística e Medieval de São Paulo and of the GT-History of Medieval Philosophy as Reception of Ancient Philosophy, at the National Association of Post-Graduation Studies in Philosophy.

Okan, Orkun Can

Dr. Okan is a Research Associate in the Faculty of History at the University of Oxford, where he is part of the ERC-funded Moving Stories project on belief and belonging in the Global Middle East. He received his PhD in History from Columbia University in 2020 and held a postdoctoral fellowship in Global History and Governance at the SSM (Scuola Superiore Meridionale) in Naples from 2020-2023. Prior to doctoral and postdoctoral studies in New York and Naples, Okan studied mainly History and Turkish Language and Literature at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul. His work on transitions to new regimes in former Ottoman domains appeared in edited volumes and peer-reviewed journals such as *Contemporary European*

History, IJMES, YILLIK and JOTSA. The book he is currently writing examines the construction of a republican regime in Turkey and the League of Nations Mandates in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq in the 1920s.

Ouaissa, Rachid

Prof. Dr Rachid Ouaissa holds the position of Chair of the Department of Middle East Politics at the Centre for Middle East Studies (CNMS) at the Philipps-Universität Marburg. His research and teaching focus is on North-South relations, the rise of fundamentalist movements, the EU's Mediterranean policy and rentier economies and systems of government in the Middle East and North Africa. He was and still is the project leader of the BMBF-funded research network 'Re-Configurations. History, Memory, and Processes of Transformation in the Middle East and North Africa'. Since April 2021, he has been the German director of the MERIAN Center of Advanced Studies in the Maghreb (MECAM) in Tunis. His recent publications include "Hartmut Elsenhans and Contemporary Algeria" (2018) and "Algeria's middle classes, rents, and political stagnation" (2018).

Serres, Thomas

Thomas Serres is an assistant professor of Politics at UC Santa Cruz. His research spans the field of Middle Eastern studies, critical security studies and comparative politics, and combines an ethnographic approach with a conceptual apparatus inspired by critical theory. He is particularly interested in the effects of protracted and entangled crises (popular uprisings, "war on terror," refugee crisis, neoliberalization) in North Africa and beyond. His first book, *The Suspended Disaster: Governance by Catastrophization in Bouteflika's Algeria*, was published in 2023 with Columbia University Press, expanding on a French edition initially released in 2019. He has also co-edited the volume *North Africa and the Making of Europe* with Bloomsbury Publishing (2018).

Sezzi, Guilia

Giulia Sezzi is a third-year PhD student in Transnational Governance at Scuola Normale Superiore, specializing in critical border and migration studies. She holds a bachelor's degree in political philosophy and a master's degree in global culture, from the University of Bologna. Her current research focuses on the topic of disappearance in migration, examining both its governmental implementation by European and third-state border authorities across the Mediterranean region and the strategies employed by people on the move and their broader social network to counter-map and resist it.

Stuchtey, Benedikt

Dr Benedikt Stuchtey, Full Professor at the Philipps University of Marburg since 2013; 2004-13 Deputy Director of the German Historical Institute London; visiting professorships at the universities of Basel, Cambridge, Munich, Oxford and Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Fellow of the Royal Historical Society since 2000. Main research interests: History of international relations; history of European colonialism and imperialism since 1750, in particular the British Empire; history of science; family and childhood history. Most recent publication on the history of imperialism: *Geschichte des Britischen Empire*, Munich 2021.

Van Ommeren, Emile

Emile van Ommeren is a postdoctoral researcher at the School of International Studies in Trento

(Italy), where he works in the project ‘Food connections: intended and unintended consequences of trade on food and nutrition security’. He obtained his Ph.D. in Political Science at the University of Antwerp (2023), and he has previously worked as a policy officer at the Dutch Ministry of Finance. He studied International Economics and Business at Utrecht University and Political Science at the Free University of Brussels.

Wüst, Andreas

Andreas Wüst is Junior Fellow at the Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS). Since October 2018, after completing his studies in Classics at Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich and Sorbonne in Paris, he has been working as a PhD student with the African Politics and Development Policy Chair at the University of Bayreuth, Germany. By the end of November 2024, he will submit his PhD thesis analysing the use of cultural policies as a means of autocratic power maintenance in Morocco. He has also published on Moroccan soft power, focusing on cultural and sports diplomacy. Furthermore, he has co-authored “Jemen – der vergessene Krieg”, a book about the ongoing war in Yemen, published in 2019 with C.H. Beck. Outside academia, Andreas Wüst has also worked as a policy advisor for development policies at the German Bundestag and gained practical work experience as a conference organiser and intern in Tunisia.

Znaien, Nessim

Nessim Znaien is a Junior Professor at the University of Marburg, holding the (Post)colonial Maghreb Chair since April 2022. After studying history in Lyon and Paris, he defended a doctoral thesis at the University of Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne in September 2017, entitled “Les raisins de la domination. Histoire sociale de l’alcool dans la Tunisie du Protectorat (1881-1956)”. To complete this thesis, Nessim Znaien was awarded a grant from the Institut de Recherche sur le Maghreb Contemporain (IRMC), a French research institute based in Tunis (2014-2017). He was also a lecturer at the University of Aix-Marseille (2017-2020). Nessim Znaien is one of the directors of publication of the journal *l’Année du Maghreb*. He conducts research on the history of material culture in the colonial and post-colonial Maghreb, in particular on the history of food and cereals.