

Cities in the Arab Imagination: Fiction, Reality, and Futurescapes

MECAM Transregional Workshop| Tunis, 24-25 June 2025

ABSTRACTS

Tuesday, 24 June 2025

Arrival of participants & Welcome coffee 9:00–9:30

Welcome and Opening Remarks (*starting at 9:15*)

[Amel Guizani](#) (MECAM Director/University of Tunis)

Panel 1 / Speculative Futures and Urban Dystopias (9:30-11:00)

Chair: [Diana Abbani](#) (MECAM/Forum Transregionale Studien)

[Teresa Pepe](#) (University of Oslo/MECAM Fellow 2021) – **Cities of the Future in the Arab Literary Imagination**

Nowadays contemporary Arabic literature and cultural production abound with depictions of future cities. Yet this topic has occupied the minds of Arab authors and thinkers from the early-twentieth century to the present day. This talk draws on a selection of texts drawn from modern and contemporary Arabic cultural production - including a short story by Mustafa Lutfi al Al-Manfaluti published in 1910, a play by the architect and thinker Hassan Fathy written in 1942, as well as science fiction novels from the 1980s and 2000s, and finally, contemporary dystopian Arabic climate fiction - to address the following questions: What do future cities look like in these fictional texts? How do elements such as class, gender, religion, and socio-economic disparities factor into these depictions? How do visions of future cities change in response to evolving urban and non-urban landscapes in the region? Lastly, what is the connection between these futuristic visions and the changing climate of the Arab region?

The central aim of this talk is to connect these imaginary cities with the realities from which they originate and to show the relation between future thinking and attempts to change the present.

[Rasha Chatta](#) (Freie Universität Berlin/MECAM Fellow 2021) – **Fragments of Tomorrow: the Speculative Cartographies of Beirut in Comics**

This presentation investigates the emergence of the speculative turn in contemporary Arab literature and visual culture, with a particular focus on the comics genre. It examines the deployment of speculative elements as narrative and aesthetic strategies for engaging with socio-political realities. Through a close reading of selected works by contemporary Lebanese comic artists, the analysis considers how speculative fiction reimagines the urban space of Beirut as a dystopian epicenter, articulating collective anxieties and envisioning prospective futures. By identifying recurring tropes and formal techniques, the study interrogates the genre's capacity to mediate speculative futurity and its potential as a critical framework within the context of Arab cultural production.

Panel 2 / Urban Memory and Gendered Topographies (11:30-13:00)

Chair: [Rached Khalifa](#) (University of Tunis El Manar)

Hanan Natour (Freie Universität Berlin/ EUME fellow) – Cities and the Construction of Memory in the Novels of Tunisian Women Writers

Focusing on Tunisian women writers and their engagements with the city of Tunis, my contribution sheds light on urban perspectives that are often sidelined. They are characterised by an awareness of the past which contradicts the futurescapes explored in utopian and dystopian texts. Comparing 'Arūsiya al-Nālūṭi's *Tammās* (Mutually Touching, 1995) and Rashīda al-Shārnī's *Tarātīl li-ālāmiḥā* (*Hymns to Her Pains*, 2011), the presentation relates to the workshop's theme in two ways: It engages with literary histories of an existing Arab city, and it explores how people engage with it despite the boundaries of class and segregation. Through the eyes of their narrating female characters, the novels address the colonial predicament and the social inequalities which continue to shape their lives in the postcolonial context. How do Tunisian women writers navigate these layers of history in their urban environment? Which literary topographies do they develop in response to these challenges?

Hager Ben Driss (University of Tunis) – Wounded Cities: Autogeography and Urban Imagination in Fay Afaf Kanafani's *Nadia, Captive of Hope*

In *Nadia, Captive of Hope: Memoir of an Arab Woman* (1999), Fay Afaf Kanafani recounts a life shaped by the turbulent histories of Beirut and Haifa, two cities marked by conflict and division. Kanafani's memoir illuminates the intricate interplay between personal experience and spatial dynamics, framing her autobiography as a lens for urban studies. Her narrative explores how war wounds cities, rendering them contested sites of memory, loss, and resistance.

Panel 3 / Liminal Tunis: Emotion, Sacredness, and Silence (14:00-16:00)

Chair: [Rim Triki](#) (University of Tunis El Manar)

Douja Mamelouk (Southern Mediterranean University Tunis) – The City of Tunis: A Landscape of Trauma and Silence

What happens when a psychiatrist investigates the suicide of her patient, only to uncover a profound secret that connects them: they share the same trauma? In this talk, I explore the city of Tunis as a landscape of silence, despite the hustle and bustle of its crowded streets, through Hind El Ziedi's novel *al-Samt aw Skizūfrenia* (2018).

Cyrine Kortas (MECAM Fellow/University of Gabes) – A Tavern in the Old Medina: A Liminal Space Reconciling the Profane and Sacred in El-Khaldi's *Awtad*

This paper explores how Mohamed El-Khaldi's novel *Awtad* employs the setting of a tavern in the Old Medina of Tunis to delve into the intricate dynamics between the sacred and the profane, reflecting on the theme of temporality and the imagining of the future through a remembrance of the past. By situating the narrative in a traditionally "profane" space within a historically the sacred and academic environment of the Old Medina of Tunis, El-Khaldi reimagines the Medina as a liminal zone where these opposing forces and temporalities converge. This convergence frames the Tunisian identity during a period of societal upheaval, where aspirations for freedom and prosperity were faltering, following the Arab Spring.

Immersed in a Sufi framework of a spiritual journey of self annihilation into the divine, the novel challenges conventional dichotomies between piety and transgression, sacred and profane, now and then, the political and spiritual. The tavern setting becomes a microcosm of the Tunisian experience, reflecting the characters' internal struggles to reconcile desires with

spiritual aspirations in a rapidly changing society. By examining how the past informs the present and shapes visions of the future, this study argues that El-Khaldi constructs a holistic vision of Tunisian identity where the pursuit of earthly pleasures and divine knowledge are intertwined aspects of a spiritual journey for self-realization. This narrative approach underscores the importance of remembering the past to imagine a future where tradition and modernity coexist harmoniously.

Vanessa Barish (Philipps University Marburg) – **The Carthage Film Festival and the Dream City Festival: Decolonial cultural practice in Tunis**

This paper explores how the Carthage Film Festival (JCC) and the contemporary art festival Dream City serve as cultural strategies of decolonialization in Tunisia. JCC, founded in 1966, provides a platform for African and Arab cinema, deliberately reversing traditional North-South hierarchies by prioritizing South-South exchange and cultural autonomy. Dream City, established in 2008, engages with the urban and social fabric of Tunis through site-specific art, aiming for inclusion and dialogue across global and local contexts. While both festivals challenge colonial legacies in culture, they navigate ongoing tensions between local agency, international funding, and global recognition. Together, they illustrate the complexities and compromises of decolonial cultural practice in a societies of the Global South.

Keynote Lecture (16:30-17:30)

Chair: Anis Ben Amor

Samia Kassab-Charfi (University of Tunis) – **Migrations and Symbolic Reconstructions: Testour and the Making of a Morisco Imaginary**

This presentation aims to revisit the identity and symbolic construction of Testour, a Tunisian village founded in the early 17th century by the last wave of Moriscos (Andalusian Muslims and Jews expelled from Spain after the Reconquista). Through a semiological approach, we seek to analyze how an urban imaginary is constructed and transposed through processes of recomposition within a place of exile. Beyond a simple historical reconstruction, our goal is to explore the symbolic interplay of cultural, religious, architectural, and ritual signs within a dynamic where memory, imagination, and spatial appropriation intersect. Ultimately, we will also examine how this place embodies a unique cultural hybridity, blending Arab-Muslim, Christian, Jewish, and Ottoman influences.

Wednesday, 25 June 2025

Panel 4 / Urban Nostalgia and the Moral City (9:30-11:00)

Chair: Samira Mechri (University of Tunis El Manar)

Nermin Elsherif (Utrecht University) – **Against the City of Today: Virtue, Morality, and the Geographies of al-zamān al-gamīl**

Bereft of a future to look forward to and hemmed in by state surveillance, groups of middle-class Egyptian men in their late fifties are turning to social media to craft online memorials to al-zamān al-gamīl (the good old days). Unlike dominant nationalist nostalgic narratives in Egypt that pine either for the belle époque or the Nasserist era, their nostalgia presents itself as strictly apolitical and ahistorical—yet occasionally geographical or momentary, anchored in specific memories or places. Rather than aligning with a historical period or political project, this nostalgia is shaped by a moral imagination. It locates itself in modest, banal, often puritanical spaces—countryside fields, school playgrounds, family homes—that occupy a shared terrain in generational memory. These spaces are imbued with al-akhhlāq wa-l-faḍīla

(morality and virtue), becoming synonymous with authenticity and proper conduct. They are cast in stark contrast to the present-day city, depicted as corrupted, chaotic, morally polluted and culturally alienating. In this paper, part of an ongoing book project, I explore the cultural and political resonance of these remembered geographies. I argue that they function as stage sets for an imagined past—one shaped by what I frame as "statist conservatism" and a longing not for radical change, but for a gentler, more merciful form of capitalism.

Diana Abbani (MECAM/Forum Transregionale Studien) – **Singing the City: Satire, Family, and the Urban Imagination in Bilad al-Sham under the Mandate Period (1920s–1940s)**

What does it mean to imagine the city through song, irony, gossip, and everyday frustrations? This talk explores how satirical recordings produced in Bilad al-Sham during the Mandate era became sonic traces of urban life in motion. These songs did not simply entertain; they staged family disputes, mocked colonial modernity, and captured the contradictions of rapidly changing cities.

Framed as humorous dialogues or domestic dramas, these recordings voiced collective anxieties about gender roles, social class, and cultural alienation, often playing out in kitchens, cafés, and living rooms. They turned the city into a space of tension and imagination: between tradition and modernity, east and west, belonging and fragmentation. By reading these songs as a form of popular urban critique, the talk rethinks the Arab city not only as a built environment, but as an affective and political terrain where identity was contested, memory performed, and futures imagined.

Panel 5 / Resonant Geographies: Memory, Violence, and the Poetics of Places (11:30-13:00)

Chair: **Faten Bouchrara** (MECAM/University of La Manouba)

Haikel Al-Hazgui (Writer) – **The City: Its Violence, Voices, and Music (Using Tunis as a Case Study) (in Arabic)**

المدينة: عنفها وأصواتها وموسيقاتها (من خلال نموذج تونس العاصمة)

صنعت المدينة أصواتها وتجذرت فضاءاتها حسب أنماط الغناء الذي ارتبط باليومي وبالمكان، والتبس بخصوصية تونسية لها جذورها وتراكمتها المتوسطية والمغربية والعربية والإفريقية مثل المزود الذي تسيّد صوت المدينة لعقود طويلة وتراجع نسبياً أمام تفجّر الرب الذي أسّس لسردية مغايرة.

كيف شكّلت المدينة أصواتها التي استوعبت عنفها وضجيجها وأزماتها؟ وكيف صار الصوت شاهداً على تاريخ المدينة ومُنْبأً بانهيائها المحتملة عبر تلاشي بعض المعاجم والخيالات والأصوات، ومستشرفاً لأنماط وتصورات جديدة تعكس قلقاً معمارياً وحضرياً ووجودياً داخل المدينة؟

Rached Khalifa (University of Tunis El Manar) – **The Village as Mythopoetics of History: The Case of Ksibet in Maher Abderrahman's *The Ghosts of the Vestibule***

In myth, the foundation of a city most often follows divine or oracular injunction. Cadmus was instructed by the oracle of Delphi to follow a cow and found his city where it collapses out of exhaustion. Dido also uses a cow hide to swindle the local chieftain into selling her a parcel of land to found her city upon a hill—Carthage. In myth and literature, cities are synonymous with self-knowledge and nation-building, that is, with individual and collective identity formation. In Abderrahman's *The Ghosts of the Vestibule*, Mukhtar, the narrator and main character, also finds himself navigating through Tunisian cities to trace his family history in order to discover more about himself and his father, Sheikh Mukhtar. Ksibet, a village "perched on a high hill,

facing the Gulf of Monastir,” is presented as the locus of Mukhtar’s quest for self-knowledge. The village hurls the protagonist into a relentless search for filial connections and genealogical beginnings, going back to precolonial times. In Ksibet, Mukhtar not only confronts his image in the mirror bequeathed by his neglectful and ruthless father, but he discovers the complex history of the village, both as factual and mythopoetic reality, rendered through various narratives recounted by different personae. The village bears its past “like the lines of a hand,” as Calvino says in *Invisible Cities*. Abderrahman’s Ksibet bears these lines like a trauma carved into its collective memory. It is a site wherein fictional, biographical (and even autobiographical) and historical lines and lives overlap, clash and write the village’s polyphonous narrative. It is a site in which myth and reality, life and death, interiority and exteriority are epitomised in the liminal space of the “vestibule.” The village is at once imagined mythopoetically and lived postally, at once fictionalised and localised, whose personae are both ghosts and real, despots and underdogs.

Panel 6 | Translating the City: Language, Belonging, and Representations of Urban Space in Arabic Literature (in Arabic) (14.00-15.30)

[Messaouda Ben Boubaker](#) (Writer) and [Walid Souleiman](#) (Writer) in conversation with [Moncef Ben Abdeljelil](#) (Beit Al-Hikma).

ترجمة المدينة: اللغة والانتماء وتمثّلات الفضاء الحضري في الأدب العربي

مسعودة بن بوبكر (كاتبة) ووليد سليمان (كاتب) في حوار مع منصف بن عبد الجليل (بيت الحكمة).

يتناول هذا الحوار تمثّلات المدينة وتحولاتها وشواغلها وأشياءها كمت تسردها نماذج من الأدب العربي المعاصر في تونس، من خلال مقاربات ثقافية واجتماعية وسياسية. ويناقش كيف تتشكل المدن تحت تأثير الهجرة والنزاعات والعولمة، وكيف تترجم تلك السرديات نظرة المجتمعات إلى تاريخها وهويتها كما تتجلى في فضاء المدينة. كما يتساءل عن دور اللغة في صياغة تلك السردية وعن فعل الترجمة بالمعنى الحرفي والمجازي في بناء الذاكرة والانتماء وصورة المدينة في المخيال الجمعي.

PARTICIPANTS: SPEAKERS & DISCUSSANTS

Diana Abbani is a cultural historian of the Modern Middle East. She is currently working as the science communication coordinator for the project Merian Center for Advanced Studies in the Maghreb (MECAM) at the Forum Transregionale Studien (Berlin). Her research focuses on popular and material culture, the implications of social, political, and technological changes, as well as the emergence of music industries and entertainment in Beirut and *Bilad al-Sham* region.

Haikel Al-Hazgui هيكل الحزقي. كاتب وناقد موسيقي وباحث في الثقافة الشعبية. نشر بدوريات عربية في الموسيقى والقصة. له إصداران: "سحنون الذي انتصر وحيدا على الحلفاء" (2023) و"أجواد وأوغاد - قصة الباندي التونسي" (2024).

Vanessa Barish is a PhD candidate at Philipps University Marburg, researching "German North-South Partnerships on Equal Terms." She also works as a freelance journalist, covering topics related to the Maghreb, cultural policy, global justice, and migration. She studied Migration Studies in Osnabrück and Lisbon, as well as European Studies in Passau and Rome. Following her studies, she worked in the field of German international cooperation, including in the context of the UN peace process for Syria and German university partnerships.

Moncef Ben Abdeljelil is a former professor of classical Islamic thought at the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, University of Sousse, Tunisia. Appointed from 1992 to 2000 as Advisor to the Ministry of Education and Sciences to reform Islamic studies. From 2003 to 2009, he joined AKU's Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations, based in London. From 2011 to 2017, he was elected Dean of the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, University of Sousse, where he established a Center of Social and Cultural Anthropology, and contributed to the inception of a Master's in African Studies with the support of the University of Bayreuth, Germany. In 2018, he joined the Tunisian Academy of Sciences, Letters, and Arts, "Beit Al-Hikma", the Academy of Aix-en-Provence, and the Royal Academy of Morocco. Main publications include: "Die Moderne aus der Perspektive muslimischer Kulturen Denken", (2012); Teaching Islam in Tunisia from 2011 to 2016 (2016); What Was Muhammad's Religion Before Islam (2017); On Q: V/44 and the Challenge of Pluralism (in German); Hikâyat Ghâ'ib (novel, 2019); Budhûr al-Mawâsim (autobiography, (4 Vols 2019- 2022); Foundational Moments in Islam (2022, and 2025).

Anis Ben Amor is a Senior Lecturer at the Higher Institute of Humanities in Tunis, University of Tunis El Manar. He studied African Studies and European Ethnology at the Humboldt University of Berlin and he holds a Ph.D. in Literary and Cultural Studies from the same university. He dealt in his PhD with the issue of Influences of Surrealism in African Literatures. During his PhD studies in Germany, he participated in seminars and projects of the Institute of Advanced Studies (Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin) such as the Working Group "Modernity and Islam" and the Research Group "Europe in the Middle East – The Middle East in Europe". Among his academic interests are Methodology in Humanities, Translation, Comparative Literature, German Studies, history of Arab-German international relations. Ben Amor coordinated multiple national and international projects thanks to a training in sustainable management in Aachen, including DAAD-funded projects, Erasmus+, BMBF funded projects. Ben Amor was Project Coordinator of the Research Group "Tunisia in Transition" during 2013 and 2014 and he served as member of the steering committee for the Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA), Co-President and is newly elected as AGYA-Alumni Ambassador for Tunisia and Libya.

Hager Ben Driss is an Associate Professor at the University of Tunis. She teaches Anglophone literature and her research interests focus on gender and postcolonial studies. She published several articles on Arabic and Tunisian literature and translated numerous Tunisian poems into

English. Her work shows a keen interest in interdisciplinarity with a special focus on Mobility Studies. She is editor of *Mobilizing Narratives: Narrating Injustices of (Im)Mobility* (2021). She has recently published *Tunisian Women Novelists: Testimonies of Resistance and Resilience* (2024).

Messaouda Ben Boubaker

مسعودة بوبكر من مواليد 1954 بمدينة صفاقس /تونس.

عضو اتحاد الكتاب التونسيين، اتحاد الكتاب العرب، نادي القصة أبو القاسم الشابي، مركز البحوث والدراسات والتنسيق حول المرة "الكريديف". كتبت الرواية والقصة القصيرة والشعر والمقال، وقصص الأطفال، واليوميات والمسرح، مع ترجمة نصوص من الفرنسية إلى العربية. وترجمت بعض نصوصها إلى اللغة الفرنسية. كما كتبت البطاقة الأسبوعية على امتداد عشرين سنة في صحف محلية. أنتجت برامج ثقافية إذاعية في كل من الإذاعة الوطنية وإذاعة تونس الثقافية. نالت أعمالها الروائية جوائز أدبية مختلفة وشكلت كتاباتها السردية مواضيع بحث ورسائل جامعية. شاركت في عديد لجان تحكيم في مسابقات أدبية وطنية، وفي ندوات فكرية في كل من سوريا / المغرب / ليبيا/ جنيف. نالت عديد التكريمات من جهات رسمية وثقافية.

Faten Bouchrara is a researcher with two Master's degrees in Gender Studies and Heritage. Currently pursuing a PhD in History and Heritage at the university of La Manouba. She explores the processes of memory reconstruction and re-foundation, alongside the complexities of heritage and its transmission. She also participated in several enhancement and preservation projects, including the enhancement of the Ennejma Ezzahra Museum of Musical Instruments. She is a member of the MECAM team and a collaborator at the Liaison Office of Philipps-Universität Marburg in Tunis.

Rasha Chatta is a comparative literature and cultural studies scholar, specialising in the contemporary Arab world and its diasporas. For the last three years, she has been an Associate Researcher at the Freie Universität Berlin where she will also soon start co-leading a Volkswagen-funded project on feminist comics in the Arab Mediterranean and Latin America. She has published scholarly articles on Arab migrant narratives, war literature, visual archives, and Arab comics, in addition to numerous magazine entries and podcasts on comics. Her book *Esquisse de la Révolte. La Bande dessinée féministe arabe* [Sketching the Revolt. An Overview of Arab Feminist Comics] will be published in 2025 with éditions Lorelei.

Nermin Elsherif is an assistant professor of Screen Cultures and Heritage in Utrecht University. Trained in cultural studies her work examines the relationship between the popular and the political. Her work-in-progress book project explores nostalgia and statist conservatism in post revolutionary Egypt. Her new research interrogates kitsch as an aesthetic of digital fascism. In her earlier life, she designed books, maps and spaces

Amel Guizani is Assistant Professor of English Language and Literature at the University of Tunis and Director of the Higher Institute of Digital Engineering (HIDE) of Tunis. She was appointed Co-Director of the MECAM Centre in July 2024 under the terms of the joint research project initiated by Philipps Universität Marburg and the University of Tunis. She represents the University of Tunis on the Executive Board of the MECAM Center, and ensures coordination between this research structure and the University of Tunis.

Samia Kassab-Charfi is a Tunisian scholar and Professor of French and Francophone Literature at the University of Tunis. She translated Béchir Khraïef's *Barg Ellil* from Arabic into French (Sud Éditions, 2023), winning the 2023 Ibn Khaldoun-Senghor Translation Prize awarded by the OIF (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie) and ALECSO (Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization). Her research on multilingualism includes « La question du multilinguisme au Maghreb : représentations de la langue et postures

d'appropriation » (<https://globalcenters.columbia.edu/news/la-question-du-multilinguisme-au-maghreb-french>). She also co-authored « Économies du vivant : le témoignage de la littérature » (with Hind Soudani) in *Œuvres et critiques*, Narr Francke Attempto, 2024). Forthcoming (with Emna Beltaïef): *Intimacy and Politics in Photographic Self-narratives: Writing in the Occident and in the Maghreb* (UK/Taylor & Francis / MECAM). Kassab-Charfi heads the *Intersignes* Research Laboratory at the University of Tunis and the Sefar book series at Academia-L'Harmattan. She also co-edits the « Studien zu den Romanischen Literaturen und Kulturen » series at Peter Lang Berlin. She serves as the Maghreb representative associate member of the Académie des Sciences d'Outre-mer (Paris) and is a member of the Association Européenne d'Études Francophones (Brussels).

Rached Khalifa is Professor of Literature at the Higher Institute of Human Sciences of Tunis, University of Tunis El Manar. He has earned his PhD in Literature from Essex University, where he taught as GTA and lecturer for some years. His research interests include English and Irish literature, comparative literature, cultural studies and literary translation. He has published numerous articles and books on W. B. Yeats and other authors. He has also published on Tunisian cinema and Liction. His latest article on Yeats's poetics of echo appeared in *Journal of Modern Literature* (JML). His forthcoming chapter on revisiting Yeats's Orientalism will appear in *The New Yeats Studies* in 2025 (published by Cambridge University Press). Rached has also translated Liction works from Arabic into English, commissioned by the Institut de Traduction de Tunis and international institutions. Rached is interested in creative writing. He has published short stories and poems in the Scottish creative magazine, *Gutter*.

Cyrine Kortas is a long-term fellow at MECAM, 2023-2026. She is also an assistant professor of English literature at the University of Gabes, Tunisia. She is a member of the Research Unit LAD at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Sfax. Her research interests include Lawrentian studies, comparative literature, and feminist and gender studies.

Douja Mamelouk is an Associate Professor of English and Liberal Arts at Southern Mediterranean University in Tunis. She holds a BA in Political Science and French Literature from Willamette University, Salem, Oregon, an MA in Middle Eastern Studies from the American University in Cairo, and a Ph.D. in Arabic Language, Literature, and Linguistics from Georgetown University, Washington, DC. She was an Assistant Professor at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and an Associate Professor at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, New York. Her research focuses on masculinity in Tunisian women's fiction, French/Arabic usage in women's literature, the literary avant-garde in colonial Tunisia, and the translated work of Egyptian Marxist Arwa Saleh.

Samira Mechri is a Senior Lecturer of cultural and post-colonial studies at the Higher Institute of Human Sciences, University of Tunis El Manar. She is also the coordinator of the Joint MA in Migration Studies. She obtained an MA in Comparative Cultural Studies from the University of Warwick in England, a Certificate in Migration from the University of Hannover in Germany, and a PhD in Cultural Studies on the Anglo-American travel Writing about the Maghreb on a joint programme between the University of Warwick, England, and the Faculty of Arts, La Manouba, Tunisia. She was the Head of the Department of English from 2011 to 2017 and the Director of Studies and Internships at the Higher Institute of Human Sciences from 2017 to 2020. She is currently the coordinator of the double diploma between the University of Tunis El Manar and the University of Palermo, Italy, and the Erasmus+ Institutional coordinator at the UTM. She is also the University of Tunis El Manar scientific coordinator of the Capacity Building Project MIGRANTS. She taught courses on Migration at the University of Palermo in Italy and the University of Passau in Germany. She has published articles on the issue of mobility, sexuality and the veil, travel and travel writing, the Anglo-American Encounter with the Maghreb, and the International Women's University and Intellectual diaspora. She is also the co-editor of *Transnational Landscapes and Postmodern*

Poetics (2017), *Culture at the Crossroads: From Epistemological Meanderings to Interdisciplinary Praxis* (2021) and *Migrations: Socio-cultural Contexts and Constitutions* (2023).

Hanan Natour is a German-Palestinian Postdoctoral Researcher of Arabic and Comparative Literature at the Cluster of Excellence "Temporal Communities: Doing Literature in a Global Perspective" (Freie Universität Berlin) and an Associated Fellow of the programme "Europe in the Middle East — The Middle East in Europe (EUME)" at Forum Transregionale Studien. She obtained her PhD in Arabic and Literary Studies with a thesis on modern Tunisian fiction (Freie Universität Berlin, 2024). Her first monograph *The Tunisian Novel – Narratives of Liberation, Emancipation and Decoloniality* is forthcoming with Edinburgh University Press. 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 (Bloomsbury, 2026). During her PhD, she served as Research Associate to 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 Göttingen, 2016), including a year of studying abroad at Paris-Sorbonne University. For her MPhil and PhD research, she spent seven months in Tunis.

Teresa Pepe is a Professor of Arabic Studies at the University of Oslo. Her research interests include Arabic literature, media, popular culture, sociolinguistics, and the relation between aesthetics and politics. She is the author of the book *Blogging From Egypt: Digital Literature, 2005-2016* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2019) which explores blogs as forms of digital literature emerging in Egypt during the rise of the political protest of the Arab Spring. She is the co-editor of the volume *Arabic Literature in the Posthuman Age* (with S. Guth, Harassowitz Verlag 2019), which examines the use of dystopia, necropolitics, monsters and satire in Arabic literature today. She has also edited two special issues for the *BRILL Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*, one on "Media Transition and Cultural Debates in Arabic Societies" (with Barbara Winckler, 2022) and one entitled: "Arab Futures Re-considered: Historical, Cultural and Ecological Approaches". Her Chapter on "Futures" is forthcoming in the *Cambridge Companion for Modern Arabic Literature*. In 2021, Teresa was a MECAM Fellow.

Walid Souleiman

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