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CA18129 - Islamic Legacy: Narratives East, West, South, North of the Mediterranean (1350-1750)

TRAINING SCHOOL:

NORTHERN EUROPE AND ISLAM. BORDERS AND NON-CONTACT ZONES IN LATE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN TIMES, WITH A FOCUS ON SCANDINAVIA

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Deadline: 15th April 2023

Dates: 6th-9th June 2023.

Place: Stockholm (Sweden).

Scientific coordinators: Kurt Villads Jensen (Stockholm University), Joachim Östlund (Lund University), Jan Loop (Copenhagen University).

Host institution: Stockholm University (SU).

Number of students: 15 (Students from ITC Countries are specially encouraged to apply).

Participants: MA Students, Ph.D. Candidates and Early Stage Scholars (up to 3 years after the PhD).

Abstract:

Over the past decades, Marie Louise Prat's concept of "contact zone" has made an huge impact on studies of cultural encounters in travel writing and colonial settings. In current historiography contacts between Europe and Islam have mainly been studied in the context of a shared border, with its specific cultural and political dynamics, and thereby produced a certain theoretical/historical knowledge. Much less attention has been paid on how networks, encounters and knowledge were produced in the context of non-contact zones. This is the case for the Nordic region, which is geographically clearly separated from "Muslim Lands". Nonetheless, imaginary borders were still produced, and the Nordic countries has large holdings of archival and printed material concerning pre-modern studies of Islam, that has not been fully explored and never compared with source material from the Mediterranean and other contact zones.

The aim of this training school is to discuss the dynamics of encounters between Christian Europe and the Islamic world in non-contact zones, particularly in Scandinavia in medieval and early modern times. It will study the transmission of objects, texts and people and analyse the ways in which they were interpreted and understood and how they affected individual and collective identities.

Field visits and lectures at the National Museums and Archives in Stockholm and Uppsala and guided tours at the Royal Museum of Livrustkammaren will complement our conferences and debate sessions, which are focused on the students' personal research. The overarching goal is to create a space of debate and exchange among junior and senior scholars, as well as to promote a network of scholars of early modern migration and identities that will bring new perspectives into the field. Students will be asked to prepare one small introduction to a specific topic that will be discussed on those visits, and to make a brief presentation of their own case studies, with a specific focus on problems of research and methodologies, in one of the three panels specified below.



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The training school is part of the COST-Action “Islamic Legacy: East, West, North South of the Mediterranean (1350-1750)”.

Main objectives of the activity:

- a) To study Late Medieval and Early Modern networks between the Islamic worlds and Europe, with focus on Scandinavia;
- b) To discuss trade, exchange and mobility of objects and knowledge between the Mediterranean and the Baltic basin;
- c) To analyse how such phenomena had an effect in the creation of individual and collective identities;
- d) To develop a student network on long-distance encounters and Islamic legacy in Europe and Scandinavia;
- e) To promote a dialogue between junior and senior scholars.

Structure of the Training School:

This activity will be developed in 2 different spaces: Classroom (a) and Museums and archives with Islamic collections (b). It will include also a public lecture by Alastair Hamilton on ‘Scandinavians in Egypt in the Early Modern Period.’

a. Classroom Activities:

Students will be split into 3 different panels, related to their research topic. These panels will be chaired by a Senior Scholar who will choose 2-3 published papers related to the methodology of the selected subject, to be read in advance and discussed by the students in relation to their own research. During the sessions, each student should present very briefly (10 minutes) his/her own research, focusing, particularly, in the aspects related to the topic of the panel. The chair will connect these presentations to his/her own research and will present some questions to be discussed, some of them based on some previous papers recommended by him/her, and will guide a final debate of c. 50 minutes.

The trainees should send to the chair the PowerPoint presentation 1 week before the event.

Panel 1: Medieval interactions and geographies.

Chair: Kurt Villads Jensen, Stockholm University

In this panel we will analyse the different flows of persons and ideas between the Islamic worlds and Scandinavia, especially in the later Middle Ages and 16th century. Source material will include texts, pictorial representations and physical objects; and methodological discussions will focus on the routes of exchange: who were the agents in moving things, were contacts direct or transmitted through persons and cultures that added new layers of understanding to the object, and did receiving milieus in Scandinavia actually consider these elements specific Islamic and Oriental or not? We will analyze how



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different contexts creates different interpretations of the same phenomena, and discuss to which extent direct contact with members of another culture may create more thorough understanding or not.

Panel 2: Networks, experiences and knowledge exchange

Chair: Joachim Östlund, Lund University

This panel will study the mobility of objects and knowledge in the Mediterranean linked to Nordic travel and trade during the sixteenth and the first half of the eighteenth century. Source material will include texts and physical objects; and methodological discussions will focus on the routes and roots of knowledge exchange: how was Scandinavian long-distance trade and networks established, and who travelled along these routes? What external factors, such as political and cultural interests, made knowledge and objects travel and how did this change during the centuries? How did encounters give shape or transform imagined borders between Scandinavia and Mediterranean lands? The workshop will analyze situated knowledge and the dynamics between texts produced in so called non-contact zones (Scandinavia) and in contact zones (the Mediterranean) and thereby discuss methodological and theoretical aspects of cultural encounters.

Panel 3: Scientific studies

Chair: Jan Loop, Copenhagen University

Early modern Scandinavia was for a couple of centuries hotspot for the study of Oriental societies, history, religion and not least linguistics. In this panel, we will look at the history of Oriental Scholarship in Scandinavia, considered in its local and global dimension, and based on a number of case studies (individual scholars, events, scientific expeditions etc.) and selected sources (annotated manuscripts and books, diaries etc). We will discuss the origin of oriental scholarship as part of Biblical studies and its development under changing religious, institutional and cultural contexts in the 18th and 19th century; and we will analyse the global networks, within which Scandinavian scholars moved and exchanged manuscripts, objects and knowledge.

b. Visit to museums and archives with Islamic collections

These activities will be supervised by the invited scholars. The coordinators of the Training School will select several items illustrating connections between Scandinavia and the Islamic world, or items stemming from the Islamic world, and analyse them together with the students. The focus will be on methodological problems and interpretation of different kind of source material, written as well as material.

The training school will take place in Stockholm and with excursion also to Uppsala. It will be possible to combine the training school with one extra day in Lund/Copenhagen and visit the rich collections there, and fly back from Copenhagen.



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Grants for students

A call for applications will be open from 15th April to 15th May 2022. The COST Action will offer 15 grants up to 1200 € to cover travel expenses, meals, and accommodation. The amount of the grant will be adapted to the country of origin of the students.

Eligibility

Eligibility to receive financial support to attend the Training School as trainee is defined by Annotated Rules for COST Actions, ([PDF → page 59](#)). Only trainees from COST Members countries, European RTD organizations, and NNC countries are eligible to receive financial support.

Evaluation criteria

- 1.- Cover letter, with a short introduction of their own research specifying the panel to which the student aims to contribute (up to 1000 words): 5 points
- 2.- CV: 3 points.
- 3.- ITC Student: up to 1 point.
- 4.- Gender balance: up to 1 point.

Deadline and details

Students interested to participate in this training school are invited to submit their cover letters and CVs before 15th April 2023 to the course secretary (sekreterare@medeltid.su.se), and to Professor Kurt Villads Jensen (kurt.villads.jensen@historia.su.se), Dr. Joachim Östlund (joachim.ostlund@hist.lu.se), and Professor Jan Loop (jlo@teol.ku.dk).