CA18129 Open Call for Participation
Deadline 7 February 2020

Activity: Conference
Working Group: 2
Title: Soldiers, prisoners and converts between permeable borders in the Mare Nostrum (16th-18th centuries)
Date: 28th-29th May 2020
Place: Palermo (Italy)
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Abstract:
The plurality of religions and legal-normative systems coexisting in the Mediterranean spaces has generated complex configurations which escape unilateral considerations and call into question the differentiation between distinct “cultural universes”. On the contrary, even in times of strong conflict, exchanges, connections and zones of contact between Christian and Muslim societies are highlighted from multiple perspectives. In particular, a new impressive bibliography concerns the theme of forced migration and mobility, on the one side, and transcultural interactions and religious conversions, on the other one.

Mediterranean mobility has a centuries-old military, mercantile and religious history. Wars, invasions, crusades and jihads, expulsions and deportations, trade and commerce have produced voluntary or forced migration from North Africa and the Near East to Europe and vice versa. Somehow the captive, the slave, the prisoner, the renegade, the spy, the diplomat, the merchant, are its emblem.
The slave, in particular, can be redeemed and the “redemption” produces economic-financial mechanisms and religious discourses; depends on political conditioning; causes diplomatic disputes and requires legal spaces and legal institutions. Moreover, like other realities experienced by those who moved between states, religions and multiple localities, captivity leads to a multiplication of strategies of dissimulation and religious mutation, of identity negotiations, which entail fragility, relativity and contribute to highlight the vacuity of identity paradigms, redefined and renegotiated in each different context. From time to time the fluidity of religious distinctions takes on the features of ambiguity, fiction and syncretism.

With this in mind, the purpose of the congress is to involve scholars from different countries in a comparative and multidisciplinary discussion. By focusing and interweaving individual and group trajectories, as well as institutional actors and legal-regulatory productions, papers may answer some of the following questions:

- What are the rules, legal resources, political-religious, diplomatic and legal discourses of Mediterranean mobility and migration? How are they produced, used and negotiated? Which formal and informal practices do they give rise to?
- What kind of contacts, crossings, exchanges, conflicts, disputes characterize mobility taking into account the different geographical, religious and socio-cultural areas across the Mediterranean?
- What are the individual and group paths within and across confessional and religious boundaries? What are the actions, the discursive constructions, the processes of definition and redefinition to construct one’s own identity-making instances in conditions of political-religious permeability and/or confessional closures and stiffening of affiliations?
- What role do religion and law play?
- What are the (legal, political, economic, diplomatic, iconographic and literary) forms and instruments of captivity and redemption?

Participants will face those queries revolving around two lines of action:

1. Legality and pluralism: theories, standards and instruments of mobility (legislation, standards, treaties, conventions and international agreements; passports, safe-conducts, etc.; courts, consuls, judges and commercial agents)

2. Christian-Muslim captivity (conversions: overlapping religiosities and control of consciences; ransom, exchange and redemption; iconography of captivity and redemption; captivity narration).

**Deadline and details:**

Researchers interested to participate in the conference are invited to submit their proposals with a title, an abstract (no more than 500 words) and a brief bio (maximum of 15 lines) before 7 February 2020 to: islepalerma@gmail.com.

**Reimbursement of expenses:**

CA1829 might be able to reimburse travel and accommodation expenses to a limited number of researchers not yet affiliated to the Action. Applications should be submitted along with the proposals.

**More information:** please, see [https://is-le.eu/](https://is-le.eu/)