

# THE ITALIAN AND MEDITERRANEAN COLLOQUIUM

## 2017-2018

### Fall

SEPTEMBER 28, THURSDAY, 6 pm, Schapiro Center for Engineering & Physical Science  
Research, Room 415

#### **SIMONE BRIONI (Stony Brook University)**

Respondent: **Madeleine Dobie** (Columbia University)

Moderator: **Pier Mattia Tommasino** (Columbia University)

#### ***What is a 'Minor' Literature? Somali Italian Literature and Beyond***

My paper analyses to what extent Deleuze and Guattari's definition of the three main features of 'minor literature' – namely 'the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation' – are relevant in analyzing literature by authors of Somali origins in Italian. Because of Deleuze and Guattari's abstract reference to gender and race issues and their vague concern for the geographical, linguistic and cultural specificities of literatures by minor authors, I will argue that 'minor literature' should not be seen as a rigid framework to be applied in interpreting a specific case study, although its theoretical flexibility might be useful when investigating a literature that strongly refuse categorization. In particular, Deleuze and Guattari's reference to 'minor' 'literature as a literature 'in becoming' helps to identify the position of Somali Italian literature in a transnational context, proposing some changes in how 'Italian' literature has been conceptualized so far.

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OCTOBER 19, THURSDAY, 6 pm, International Affairs Building, Room 403

#### **JOSEPH VISCOMI (New York University)**

Respondent: **Silvana Patriarca** (Fordham University)

Moderator: **Konstantina Zanou** (Columbia University)

#### ***Migrants, criminals and spies in the Italian Mediterranean***

In what ways do the movements of subversive Italians during the twentieth century challenge historiography of the modern Mediterranean? What socio-political constellations emerge from their itineraries? Which boundaries are inverted or reinforced? I explore these questions through the microhistories of Italians in Egypt who evaded the law –or manipulated its ambiguity in their favor– between 1919 and 1940. Using documents that appeal either to Italian consular courts in Egypt or to Italian political leaders, in this talk I propose that these individual cases help us to understand the overlapping regimes of law, nationalism, and colonialism in what we could articulate as an Italian Mediterranean.

NOVEMBER 17, FRIDAY, 11.30 am, Fayerweather Hall, Room 310

**ANDREW ARSAN (St. John College, Cambridge)**

Respondent: **Aaron Jakes** (New School)

Moderator: **Konstantina Zanou** (Columbia University)

***Intervention: An Eastern Mediterranean genealogy***

The times in which we live are rife with interventions - humanitarian, financial, and political - into the inner affairs of sovereign states. Deep incisions into the body politic, they injure even as they seek to heal, upturning conventional understandings of the state as an autonomous entity by inserting foreign elements beneath its skin. This paper sketches out a genealogy for these practices, tracing them back to the nineteenth-century Mediterranean and the particular sovereign arrangements born of the Ottoman empire's unhappy encounter with Britain and France. From the 1830s onwards, it argues, these two states devised novel ways of organising population, territory, and debt and new understandings of sovereignty. And in doing so, they made of intervention a principle of international life.

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DECEMBER 30, THURSDAY, 6 pm, Hamilton Hall, Room 516

**ALEXANDER BEVILACQUA (Williams College)**

Moderator: **Pier Mattia Tommasino** (Columbia University)

***The Qur'an in the Enlightenment***

The Qur'an was an object of scholarly attention in the eighteenth century, when, in the wake of Lodovico Marracci's philological Latin achievement of 1698, a number of writers attempted a literary translation of the holy book of Islam. In the same period, the Qur'an also served as a multivalent symbol--of revealed religion, of literature, and of law. This paper first examines the scholarly achievements of the period's European translators from Arabic, and then compares them to the Qur'an's reception in the Enlightenment to reveal both the connections and the differences between philological and "philosophical" reception in this formative era of Western intellectual culture.

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