

# I SETTIMANA DELLA RICERCA DI ECCELLENZA

DIPARTIMENTO DI STORIA, ARCHEOLOGIA, GEOGRAFIA, ARTE E SPETTACOLO  
Dipartimento di Eccellenza MIUR 2018-2022 sulle "Eredità culturali"

FIRENZE, 11-15 NOVEMBRE 2019

## People in Motion

Presentazione della COST Action

**'PIMo: Entangled Histories of Displacement  
across the Mediterranean (1492-1923)'**

Introducono:

**Rolando Minuti** (Università di Firenze)

**Giovanni Tarantino** (Università di Firenze, PIMo Action Chair)

Intervengono:

**José María Pérez Fernández** (European University Institute)

**Chiara Petrolini** (Universität Wien)

**Ann Thomson** (European University Institute)

15 novembre 2019, ore 9.30-12.30  
SAGAS, Via San Gallo 10, Aula Parva

## Abstracts

### JOSÉ MARÍA PEREZ FERNANDEZ

#### *Paper in Motion: Methods and Case Studies for an Interdisciplinary Approach*

This seminar intends to use a series of case studies to exemplify the role of paper as (1) material medium for communication and consequently for the establishment of institutions, communities and the emotional ties that generated them, and (2) as a trope that denotes the nature and the function of the information, emotions and values it is used to record and convey. As the case studies will suggest, the different uses and functions of paper determined strategies and methods employed in the administration of the movement of people, ideas, and goods, and in the creation of complex networks (political, economic, religious, and intellectual) across the Mediterranean and beyond. There will be a particular focus upon the circulation of texts and documents involved in the articulation of discursive varieties for the expression of subjective emotional identities and for the establishment of the norms that regulated their public and social dimensions.

*Bio:* My original research started with an interdisciplinary approach to comparative literature, which then led to an interest in the relations between early modern literature and political philosophy. Recent research on translation and the book trade has led to several essays on the international republic of letters, the early modern idea of Europe, and the material transmission of texts and their translations. I am currently interested in processes of communication in the early modern world and different methods for the recording and exchange of information. I have just completed a book, with E. Wilson-Lee, on the collections and catalogues of the Biblioteca Hernandina (Hernando Colón's New World of Books. Towards a Cartography of Knowledge, forthcoming with Yale U.P.). In March of 2019 I joined the People in Motion COST Action, chaired by Professor Giovanni Tarantino, where I lead the Paper in Motion Work Group. I live and work in Granada, and I am currently in Florence as Ferdinand Braudel Fellow at the EUI.

### CHIARA PETROLINI

#### *Travelling Men, Travelling Books.*

#### *Hidden Lives in the Papers of an Orientalist Librarian in Vienna (1608–1636)*

We only see movements that are documented: we talk about “looking at movements” more than the movements themselves. How were these movements perceived, and how was the displacement narrated? Some information on these questions might be found in an unexpected source. Letters written by erudite scholars are a favoured source in the history of scholarship. But they can also reveal other presences, and the movements of travellers, exiles and refugees. The letters of Sebastian Tegnagel, imperial librarian in Vienna and a scholar of Arabic, Turkish and Persian, are one such case. Nowadays he is a ghostly figure, but in his day he was one of the leading figures of the “Republic of Arabic Letters”. Although he – as a librarian – is a sedentary figure par excellence, his letters are full of movement: of ideas, of books, and of people. In this seminar I will focus on the movement of people. Tegnagel's correspondents range from giants of philology like Casaubon and Gruter to unknown, mist-shrouded figures from a shifting ecosystem: missionaries, adventurers, interpreters, slaves and prisoners of war, from the borders of the Ottoman Empire and the shores of the Mediterranean. These were the people who conveyed information, who sold or copied the texts that would then be studied in Europe. It was thanks to them that a more precise knowledge of the Near East and of Islam was formed. Through the pages of Tegnagel, a “residual” humanity comes to life: a humanity that came from afar and was marginalised but that existed alongside and communicated with the rarefied world of the Republic

of Letters. With few, rare exceptions, these lives had to undergo conversion to Christianity before they could emerge from the shadows. The second part of this seminar will therefore focus on a collection of tales of conversion to Catholicism (soon to be published) that includes stories of women, children, slaves, and the mentally ill. This material is significant not just from a religious studies perspective but also, once again, as a source of information that sheds lights on a humanity that would otherwise have remained submerged. And in some rare cases it leaves a trace of the emotional trauma that these geographical and spiritual movements must have caused.

**Bio:** Chiara Petrolini is currently working on the project “The Oriental Outpost of the Republic of Letters. Sebastian Tengnagel (d. 1636), the Imperial Library in Vienna, and Knowledge about the Orient”, based at the University of Vienna (with T. Wallnig, H. Çelik, P. Molino, C. Römer). Her research interests focus on responses to the conflicts – political, intellectual and religious – of the 16th and 17th century. After graduating from the Scuola Normale Superiore in the history of philosophy in the early modern period, she wrote her PhD dissertation on Paolo Sarpi and his idea of sovereignty. She has always paid special attention to people in exile: she followed the stories of some Venetians who left for the England of James I, and she has worked on the multiple autobiographies of a young English poet and writer who converted to Catholicism. Driven by her interest in religious conversion, she focused on the link between violence and conversion and, conversely, on the idea of peaceful universal conversion theorized by Campanella. Together with V. Lavenia and S. Pavone, she has collected narratives of conversion held in Rome (Viella, 2020). She received fellowships including postdocs at the Warburg Institute, at the Folger Shakespeare Library and at the German Historical Institute in Rome. In July 2019 she joined the Cost Action Project “People in Motion: Entangled Histories of Displacement across the Mediterranean”, chaired by Giovanni Tarantino, where she is part of the Workgroup “Ideas in motion”, coordinated by Luisa Simonutti.

Discussant: **ANN THOMSON**

Ann Thomson is Professor of Intellectual History at the European University Institute. She works on the intellectual history of the long Eighteenth Century, in particular on the ‘natural history of man’ and the circulation of ideas and cultural exchange. Recent works include *The Enlightenment in Scotland: National and International Perspectives*, edited with Jean-François Donyach (2015), *L’âme des Lumières* (2013), *Cultural Transfers: France and Britain in the Long Eighteenth Century*, edited with Simon Burrows and Edmond Dziembowski (2010), and *Bodies of Thought: Science, Religion, and the Soul in the Early Enlightenment* (2008).



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