The Innovative Training Network "Mediating Islam in the Digital Age" (MIDA) and the
European Network for Islamic Studies (ENIS) organise
the MIDA/ENIS Spring School 2021

**Spoken images of/in Islam:
Languages and Translations in Texts and Images**

Catania – Sicily: 1ˢᵗ – 6ᵗʰ of March 2021

Call: 1ˢᵗ of November 2020

Deadline: 5ᵗʰ of January 2021

Host institution: Università degli Studi di Catania

The main objective of this school is to investigate the image–text relations in Muslim traditions by applying to different genres of images and texts and by thinking about how they are affected by translation or interpretation. The Spring School will bring together advanced academics and lecturers from different disciplines with doctoral and MA students to explore how the transfer of texts and images move from one culture to another in Muslim societies and beyond; and in what ways language functions as a mediator in this process.

Translation is an integral part of any culture, and Muslim societies are no exception. The Spring School attempts to investigate the extent to which ideology can impact the translator's style and selection of words that will, accordingly, shape the receivers' worldviews. For instance, in mediaeval times Arabic scholars translated Greek philosophical and medical works and employed this knowledge in their elaboration of Islamic sciences. Translations or rather adaptations of Western works, inspired Muslim scholars, writers and artists in the nineteenth century to produce new hybrid scholarly and artistic amalgamation of their own. Take for example, the heavy debates among Muslim scholars regarding the translation of the Qur'an throughout history. The debate has diminished and the translation of the Qur'an in almost all world languages is now reality. Also, western technologies of figurative painting and photography were introduced in the nineteenth century in the Middle East; they became striving media in the hands of local actors and practitioners. Today, Turkish television series conquer Netflix in adapted, dubbed and subtitled versions. What are the consequences of transferring a medium to another cultural context? Young researchers are stimulated to think about such questions by taking the textual and visual languages of Muslim societies as transmitters in this process throughout history.

Because they belong to a non-verbal system of representations, figurative images require specific methods of analysis taking into account the ambiguity of the meaning they project and the ways they are shaped by pre-established visual schemes and codes. Together, we aim to develop our skills pertaining to critical academic analysis and positioning the agency of texts and images in Islamic societies, their authorship and dissemination; and how this transfer

impacts what texts and images may represent. This hypothesizes, for example, that images are mediated translations of reality, staged and edited before reaching their audience. In this sense we require participants to think about the question how images frequently function in association with words, through titles, captions and labels, since gathering and composing additional information about images and words has the power to transform their message. The specifics of visual communication acquire extra weight in cultures that had long lived under a regime of aniconism, as is the case of the Sunni Muslim world.

The Spring School will also offer PhD and MA students the opportunity to develop research questions for their theses and/or present their research projects by singling out, describing, and analyzing the main semiotic features of Muslim texts and images and the ways they become a mirror, which may passively and actively reflect the mind of the exegete or the reader. The aim is to jointly further our knowledge of how translation or interpretation of texts, images or filmic materials affects their original meaning. How can we study Muslim texts and images in their different cultural, political, social and religious contexts? How are such translations or interpretations received in Islamic societies in different historical contexts? Can analytical methods grounded in the study of Western imagery be transferred to the analysis of the visual language in the Middle East and other Muslim regions?

Requirements for applications

PhD candidate students and advanced MA students, whose research focuses on this topic are invited to apply for participation.

Please note:

- Candidates enrolled at French and Spanish universities are invited to apply at IISMM giulia.galluccio@ehess.fr
- Candidates enrolled in Italian universities are invited to apply at SeSaMO segreteria@sesamoitalia.it
- Candidates enrolled in Dutch universities are invited to apply at NISIS nisis@uu.nl
- Candidates enrolled in German universities are invited to apply at the CNMS : albrecht.fuess@uni-marburg.de

Candidates enrolled in other universities than the ones mentioned are requested to apply at one of the four institutions only.

It is mandatory to specify in the application: Application Spring School 2021

Successful applicants may receive some funding from the Selection Committee.

Scientific Committee

- Dr. Petra de Bruijn (NISIS, Leiden University)
- Prof. Pascal Buresi (CNRS / EHESS-IISMM)
- Prof. Albrecht Fuess (CNMS / Philipps-University of Marburg)

- Dr. Pierre Hecker (CNMS / Philipps-University of Marburg)
- Prof. Christian Lange (Director NISIS)
- Prof. Daniela Melfa (SeSaMO / University of Catania)
- Maike Neufend (CNMS / Philipps-University of Marburg)
- Prof. Umar Ryad (NISIS / KU Leuven)
- Prof. Thijl Sunier (VU University Amsterdam)
- Prof. Mercedes Volait (CNRS / InVisu)

Applications must include the following:

1. a CV
2. a motivation letter
3. a one-page description of your PhD or MA project
4. a title and an abstract* of 300 words (max.) of your presentation (15 minutes) to be given at the spring school
5. a short biography* of 50 words (max. in the third person)

*If your application is successful these will be used in the digital program booklet. Please send your abstract and biography in word format (.doc or .docx)

Please note the following:

Successful applicants must arrange their own visa (if applicable), transport and accommodation

Please note that due to the outbreak of COVID-19 the Spring School dates may change at the last moment. We recommend you to buy tickets that can be changed or cancelled without additional costs (except for the participants through IISMM, whose transport and accommodation will be taken care of). The event could take place in an online mode.

About MIDA

The MIDA-project rests on the premise that technological innovations today and in the past have had a tremendous and unprecedented influence on Islam: on the modes of expression and communication of religious messages and traditions, and on the modes of engagement with society, and ultimately also on religious doctrines. In short, they have unleashed forces that have ultimately changed the face of religion This holds true as much for contemporary digitisation as for previous technological transformations. Instead of singling out one specific technological landmark as unique, subsequent innovations and transformations must be brought together into one analytical frame.

About ENIS

ENIS (European Network for Islamic Studies) stems from the collaboration of various European academic institutions: NISIS (the Netherlands Interuniversity School for Islamic Studies), IISMM (l'Institut d'études de l'Islam et des sociétés du monde musulman), CSIC (Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas), CNMS Philipps-University of Marburg (Centrum für Nah-und Mittelost-Studien), SeSaMO (Società Italiana di Studi sul Medio Oriente).