

## ***The Making and Unmaking of Identities in the Early Modern Mediterranean***

European University Institute (Florence, IT) & on Zoom

12-13 May 2022 (hybrid format)

*Deadline: 15 December 2021*

### **CALL FOR PAPERS**

When and how did identity matter in the early modern Mediterranean? How were they created and dissolved? In the past twenty years, historiography has defined the early modern Mediterranean as a region in flux where categories of belonging and classification were continuously created, contested, and remade according to political, economical, and social circumstances. This workshop questions the trend of seeing the Mediterranean merely as a space of coexistence and fluidity and aims to foster new insights and methodological approaches to the historical studies on the early modern Mediterranean.

Recent scholarship has reconceptualized the Mediterranean as a “shared world” and challenged long-time narratives based on fixed and binary national, cultural, and religious boundaries within the region. For example, in contrast to the seemingly fixed institutional and legal identities, scholars have discussed the fluidity of individual identities on the ground, from those of religious converts, to long-distance merchants

and political elites. However, this new scholarship also tends to foster the image of the Mediterranean as an exceptional context defined by notions of hybridity and fluidity.

Using “identity” as a methodological framework, this workshop will build on these discussions and seek a middle ground between the two narratives. When and how did people across the Mediterranean defend their identitarian boundaries? When did showing/claiming an identity become a necessity? When did people lose their identity? We anticipate new insights from reconsidering these terms and demanding attention to the concepts of difference and diversity in different political and religious groups.

We historicize the concept of “identity” as a constant process rather than a final product by considering contestation, limits, impermanence operating both within and outside of wider pressures. In the light of a new set of pressing questions and engagement with recent discussions in the material culture studies and historical anthropology, we see an opportunity to complicate the making and unmaking of identities in the early modern Mediterranean. The category of “identity” as an umbrella term has been mostly discussed in reference to human-human relationships across the Mediterranean. Deploying interdisciplinary insights from neighboring fields as well as itinerary histories, we envision expanding the term of identity to unfold a more complex form of interactions among humans, animals, nature, commodities, and ideas. This focus on emplacements across various ontologies in the early modern Mediterranean builds the importance of multiple temporalities which challenge Eurocentric perspectives on the notion of identity.

**How to apply:**

We require a working title, an abstract (400-500 words), a brief autobiographical sketch (50-100 words) and 5 keywords by **December 15, 2021**.

Proposals should be sent directly to: [duygu.yildirim@eui.eu](mailto:duygu.yildirim@eui.eu), [tomaso.stefini@eui.eu](mailto:tomaso.stefini@eui.eu)

Accepted proposals will be notified by 15 January 2022.

We especially invite proposals from early career scholars, women, and underrepresented groups. Accommodation and travel expenses **can** be covered by the EUI according to the reimbursement policies in place. If applicants have no access to project funds or institutional financial support, this should be specified in the application. Draft versions of the selected contributions (approximately 6000 words) are expected to be circulated in late April.

With thanks,

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