



Image: © Dario Ingusto - lacartoteca.it

Transregional
Academy
19—29 Sep 2016

Call for applications

De-Framing the Mediterranean from the 21st Century

Places, Routes and Actors

The Berlin-based Forum Transregionale Studien and the Max Weber Stiftung – Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland, in cooperation with the Institute for Mediterranean Studies and the Centre Marc Bloch, cordially invite doctoral and postdoctoral scholars from the humanities and social sciences to apply for a Transregional Academy that will be convened **19-29 September 2016** in Rethymno, Crete, at the Institute for Mediterranean Studies on the theme “De-Framing the Mediterranean from the 21st Century: Places, Routes, Actors.”

Application deadline: 9 April 2016

Forum
Transregionale
Studien

Max Weber
Stiftung
Deutsche
Geisteswissenschaftliche
Institute im Ausland



MARK
BLOCH
Centre Zentrum Marc Bloch

SPONSORED BY THE



Federal Ministry
of Education
and Research

Transregional Academy “De-Framing the Mediterranean from the 21st Century: Places, Routes and Actors”

19-29 September 2016, Rethymno (Crete)

Rationale

Recent developments—revolutions and crises, new social movements, migrants and refugees, interventions and border regimes, civil wars and authoritarian restorations—have transformed the Mediterranean into a zone of fragmentation and disaster. Perceptions of the Mediterranean have long been shaped by European perspectives. The Mediterranean has been seen as an idyllic space of civilization, of exchange and mobility, a view related to re-translations of the Roman *mare nostrum*; to those nostalgic visions of nineteenth and early twentieth-century colonial cosmopolitanism; and to modern practices of tourism and food consumption. Other discourses, also mainly shaped in Europe, consider the Mediterranean to be a zone of long-lasting conflicts extending from the Phoenicians to Arab expansion in the seventh century and from the Crusades to contemporary demographic and social disparities. In view of newly emergent political and strategic challenges, current European approaches to the Mediterranean have increasingly focused on issues of (dis)order and security. However, Europe itself has become part of a more global Mediterranean space that extends far beyond its shores.

The Transregional Academy “De-Framing the Mediterranean from the 21st Century” aims at gathering a group of doctoral and postdoctoral scholars from fields of anthropology, migration and urban studies, cultural and area studies, economics, political science, law, geography and history whose current work relates to the Mediterranean so as to probe, discuss and generate new ideas, concepts, tools and methodologies for a better understanding of current dynamics. The idea is to provide a laboratory for rethinking and discussing the history of the Mediterranean, the *Mittelmeer*, the “White Sea” from today’s perspectives and challenges. We invite participants to share approaches, insights and theories from a variety of disciplines and regional traditions in order to contribute a more inclusive position. While combining local and transnational perspectives, the Academy seeks to reconsider not only the usual disciplinary divisions but the spatial ones as well (North/South and East/West) so as to encourage new research approaches from still dominated or marginalized areas and perspectives. We aim to enhance participants’ digital savoir-faire through studies of data networks and the circulation of information while also closely heeding the concrete dimensions of space, geography and agency in its concrete contexts, dimensions and scales.

p.3 | The Transregional Academy is chaired by a group of scholars that includes **Leyla Dakhli** and **Teresa Koloma-Beck** (Centre Marc Bloch), **Zaal Andronikashvili** (Center for Literary and Cultural Research Berlin; Ilia State University Georgia), **Marinos Sariyannis** and **Apostolos Delis** (Institute for Mediterranean Studies), **Carolina Kobelinsky** (Centre for Ethnology and Comparative Sociology, Paris), and **Maysoun Sukarieh** (King's College London).

The Transregional Academy will invite up to 21 doctoral and postdoctoral scholars from different countries and academic backgrounds to present and discuss their current research within an international and multi-disciplinary framework. The Academy is designed to support scholarly networks. The program will focus on the following themes: 1) "the production of space," 2) "routes and borders," 3) "actors and agency."

Space as Legacy

To some extent the Mediterranean is defined by its geography, the sea being its central reference point, and with its shores, islands and straits both connecting that space and dividing it into regions, cities and peoples. Perceptions of the Mediterranean are informed by the legacies of earlier divisions of space and time such as colonial divisions between French North Africa and the British Middle East, the Cold War distinction between West and East, and the postcolonial divide between the European North and the African South and/or fading nostalgias for cosmopolitan, imperial or national pasts. These legacies continue to frame research on the Mediterranean along particular borders of culture, language, nation or discipline. The result of this "divided vision" is that often in academic programs addressing the Mediterranean in their title, one can see that in the separation between Maghreb and Mashreq (the Middle East and North Africa or the Middle East and the Mediterranean) the division of old French and British empires persists; the extension of the Ottoman Empire is considered as a limit for proper studies and comparisons. The legacies of history and historiography fragment the Mediterranean space. The conventional set of references and divisions complicates, if not hinders, the study of the region in alternative or global perspectives. The Academy aims to elaborate the historical production, reproduction and unmaking of political, emotional and social margins and borders in and around the Mediterranean. A historical approach should unpack intense trends of exchanges, circulations, imitations that existed, yet are still largely unknown, unrecognized or unrelated, in that space. Rather than reproducing the Mediterranean as an area, the Academy seeks to rethink its regional boundaries by investigating the imaginary aspects of space (as a projection of hopes, dreams, fears) and probing the dynamics of space as a result of current movements. Special attention will also be given to the study of the sea itself, its water and the various ways in which we might approach this specific milieu.

Routes and Borders

Recent studies on networks, movements, circulations, migration and biographical trajectories have begun to examine border spaces themselves, and often look beyond the separation of places of departure, transit and points of arrival. The Academy pursues these novel approaches so as to lend depth and meaning to the different stages, social milieus and adaptations that are created by the movement of people, goods and ideas. The mobility of people is seen not only as the transfer of humans from an old to a new environment – as the abandonment of an old space for a new or simply as a liminal space of in-between-ness – but rather as a way of dealing with the past and as an active process of constructing new environments and references, for instance in the realms of art, food, social habits, law and economics. Special focus will be given to “returns” and reverse migrations (Europeans in the South or East) from early modern times until today, e.g. transnational labor market circulations in the early modern and colonial eras, or the movements of intellectuals, engineers and teachers in the post-independence era (in former communist Europe, the Maghreb, and the Middle East). Revisiting these stories enables us to reconsider the Mediterranean as a global region of social, economic, political and cultural exchange extending far beyond a geomorphological definition of the Mediterranean space.

Actors and Agency

The Mediterranean cannot be understood without looking at the role of those entities that daily construct and reconstruct it – institutions, political parties and groups, companies, governments, merchants, pirates, workers, rebels, translators and smugglers all constitute the Mediterranean. While much has been written on abstract networks in the supposedly highly “interconnected” regions of the Mediterranean, we know less about the materiality of these lives, the concrete physical circulation of bodies (both alive and dead, young and old, male and female), about the violence inflicted upon them, their confrontation and interaction with each other and the way they inhabit this region. The Academy invites to consider the role of actors by mapping their individual and collective trajectories, providing insight into their daily practices and experiences, exploring their memories and testimonies as well as their representation (in literature, plastic and visual art, music, etc.) They can also explore the techniques and objects of life that can serve as traces for actors: places of production (be it goods or knowledge), communication networks, transregional political organizations. Not only shall European perceptions be confronted with those emerging from south and east, but also Arab and Muslim ones with their own marginalized views and experiences, i.e. of minority communities in the Middle East and north Africa. Questions of migration shall be discussed in relation to questions of gender, race, and other social disparities.

Transregional Academy Format

The Transregional Academy promotes intensive peer-to-peer debates and encourages new perspectives grown from debates in small discussion groups. Participants take an active part in contributing to the program's structure and content. They present their individual research, co-design thematic discussion groups, and are involved in organizing the workshops. While most of the work is conducted in an intensive small-group atmosphere, the Transregional Academy also presents its work to the public through general lectures and open panel discussions. For more information on the format please visit our Transregional Academies blog: <http://academies.hypotheses.org/>.

For questions regarding the concept of the Academy, please contact Leyla Dakhli at dakhli@cmb.hu-berlin.de.

Conditions of Application and Procedure

Participants receive a stipend covering travel and accommodation. The program targets doctoral and postdoctoral researchers who wish to present their ongoing projects in both a comparative perspective and in relation to the questions raised above. Moreover the researchers' work should be clearly relevant to the themes of the Transregional Academy. The working language is English. The application should likewise be in English and consist of:

- a curriculum vitae;
- a 3-5 page outline of the project on which the applicant is currently working and a brief introductory summary thereof;
- two suggested readings relevant to the Academy and which you would like to discuss with other participants (please provide bibliographical data only, no copies of the suggested readings are required);
- the names of two university faculty members who can serve as referees (no letters of recommendation required).

Sent by **e-mail** as **one PDF file** by **9 April 2016** to academies@trafo-berlin.de.

Contact

Georges Khalil
academies@trafo-berlin.de
Forum Transregionale Studien
Wallotstr. 14
14193 Berlin
T: +49 (0)30 89 001-428
F: +49 (0)30 89 001-440

The Transregional Academy is part of the strategic cooperation between the Forum Transregionale Studien and the Max Weber Stiftung – Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland. It is supported by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF).

The Berlin-based Forum Transregionale Studien is a research organization that promotes the internationalization of research in the humanities and social sciences. It is dedicated to a research agenda that systematically links disciplinary approaches and the expertise of area studies, by focusing on entanglements and interactions across national, cultural or regional borders. The Forum is supported by the Land of Berlin.

The Max Weber Stiftung promotes global research, concentrated around the areas of social sciences, cultural studies, and the humanities. Research is conducted at ten institutes in various countries worldwide with distinctive and independent focal points. Through its globally operating institutes, the Foundation is able to contribute to the communication and networking between Germany and the host countries or regions of its establishments.

For more information please see:

www.forum-transregionale-studien.de

www.maxweberstiftung.de

www.forth.gr