

XVI Convegno SeSaMO

Università degli Studi di Cagliari  
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SOCIETÀ PER GLI STUDI SUL MEDIO ORIENTE

**TITOLO/TITLE:** Circulation and métissage in the Border Cities of the Mediterranean (MENA)

**PROPONENTE/I – PROPONENT/S:** CAMILLA CEDERNA, BIANCA VALLARANO

**ABSTRACT (1500 parole/words):**

In this panel, we aim to reflect on the implications of the phenomenon of migration in a broad sense (Nouss, 2015), concerning border cities, particularly exploring the linguistic, artistic, and cultural dimensions resulting from the circulation of people, languages, and cultures.

The cities under consideration will be those on the migration routes in the Mediterranean, between North Africa and southern Italy, spanning from the 18th century to the contemporary era. Specifically, the cities of Tangier, Tunis, and Palermo, linked by a history of migration and reciprocal circulation, with migratory flows determined by various socio-political, historical, and economic factors, depending on the periods considered. Some aspects may be clarified through historical research on European emigration to North Africa from the 18th to the 20th century, particularly through the analysis of the identity and statistics of migrants (political refugees, economic exiles) and economic, political, and cultural opportunities. Why were Tangier and Tunis privileged destinations in the late 19th century for European citizens fleeing their countries for various reasons (political, economic)? Another aspect concerns the institutional framework, the context in which migrants found better opportunities in North Africa than in Europe. How did this immigration create fertile ground for the development of extremely rich and creative cultural and linguistic exchanges? For Tunis and Tangier, particular attention will be paid to studying their relationships with Sicily, from a historical perspective as well as the contemporary scene. In addition to analysing the motivations that drove Sicilians to emigrate towards the end of the 19th century, the impact of their presence in the social fabric of the country and North African cities will be highlighted: language, architecture, press, art. At the same time, we will question the consequences of migratory flows in the opposite direction on the contemporary Sicilian scene.

We consider these cities as geographical, political, and cultural entities, where a series of artistic practices coexist, interact, differentiate, and mutually influence each other, and where expressions related to migration (Straw 1991) are manifested. We will then seek to explore their various aspects, including:

- The link between the urban character of a city and the visibility and vitality of its cultural and artistic scenes.
- The connection between cosmopolitan dynamics, often fueled by migration and diasporic cultures, and local cultural traditions.

How has the configuration of the city and its spaces been determined by cultural and linguistic circulation? And on the other hand, along what trajectories has this circulation determined literary representations according to the notion of autobiogeography (Collot 2014)? What are the implications of this inter-transcultural network resulting from the condition of exile (Nouss 2015) regarding the literary and artistic productions that have developed in these places? To what extent have the layered memories of these cities shaped cultural and artistic expressions characterized by "métissage" and hybridization (Laplantine & Nouss 2016)?

Multilingualism is a fundamental characteristic of border cities. What factors influence and foster this multilingualism and can also explain the phenomenon of code-switching in the texts considered? We will attempt to document the hybrid linguistic practices and productions that occur in border cities at various levels: oral communication - including lingua franca (Dakhli 2008), haketía, daily oral expression, and market language -, literature - where writers in exile in border areas often use this multilingualism by switching from one language to another or by applying foreign linguistic forms to their first language, causing interferences and alterations at the syntactic level, for example - and theatre. How do these linguistic practices reflect a particular

representation of diversity, and at the same time an attempt to reflect on the ways and strategies of coexistence and overcoming ethnic, cultural, and religious conflicts?

Special attention will be paid to the gender-related dimension. What role have exile and migration played in female cultural production in border cities (literature, orality, narration, songs, cuisine, artistic practices, etc.)? How does female production, already marginal and invisibilized in itself, articulate and find its own space in these border places? Can we identify common characteristics and/or traits of the production of female authors whose life experience is characterized by the condition of exile, in the context of border cities (genre hybridization, role of orality, non-formalized practices)?

Proposed case studies (non-exhaustive):

- Tangier, a border city and international zone (1923).
- Tunis, a city of Italian emigration.
- Palermo (Sicily), a border, exchange, and circulation zone.

Keywords: exile, women, memory, multilingualism, métissage, hybridization, translation, lingua franca.

Disciplines: literature, history, linguistics, gender studies, sociology, economics, geography.

### Submission Guidelines

Interested individuals are invited to submit **by May 7th** to the email addresses of the organizers, and in copy to the conference email address (convegnoesamo@gmail.com), an abstract (maximum 300 words) accompanied by name, surname, affiliation, presentation title, and a brief biobibliographical note.

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##### CAMILLA CEDERNA

Full professor of Italian language, literature, and culture at the University of Lille (France). She obtained a master's degree in Comparative Literature from New York University (New York) and a PhD from the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS, Paris). In 2016, she obtained the Habilitation à diriger les recherches (HDR) on the circulation of ideas and theatre in Italy, France, and Europe. She coordinated the International Associated Laboratory (2018-2022) in collaboration with La Sapienza (Rome), on the theme of "writing female exile" in the Mediterranean space. She is responsible for the emerging project on the "Archives of Female Exile Writing" (ALEEF), particularly focusing on the literary estate of Elisa Chimenti, at the European Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences (MESHS) in Lille.

##### BIANCA VALLARANO

She is a doctoral student in literary, linguistic, and comparative studies in joint supervision between the University of Naples L'Orientale and the University of Lille (France). She studied at La Sapienza (Rome) and Sorbonne University (Paris). Her doctoral thesis focuses on the study, editing, and translation from French to Italian of an unpublished collection by Elisa Chimenti. Her research interests include women's writing and feminist criticism, border and marginal literature, and digital philology.

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