



**JOHN CABOT  
UNIVERSITY**

*An American university in the heart of Rome*



GUARINI INSTITUTE  
for PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
*John Cabot University*

## **Using the Past for the Present: Medieval Narratives in Modern Political and Religious Discourse**



### **International Conference**

28-29 March 2025

**John Cabot University**

Keynote Speakers:

- Prof. Patrick Geary, Institute for Advanced Study – Princeton
- Prof. Tamar Herzog, Tel Aviv University
- Prof. Gábor Klaniczay, Central European University

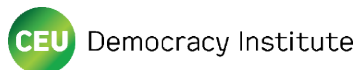
### **The Organizing Committee:**

- Fabrizio Conti, John Cabot University
- Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri, University of Urbino Carlo Bo
- Serena Di Nepi, Sapienza University of Rome

### **The Scientific Committee:**

- Federigo Argentieri, Guarini Institute for Public Affairs, John Cabot University
- Fabrizio Conti, John Cabot University
- Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri, University of Urbino Carlo Bo
- Michael Driessen, John Cabot University
- Umberto Longo, Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medioevo and Sapienza University of Rome
- Serena Di Nepi, Sapienza University of Rome
- Vincent Ferré, Sorbonne Nouvelle University (Paris 3)
- Laszlo Kontler, Central European University
- Marina Montesano, University of Messina
- Marla Stone, Occidental College

*The event is sponsored by the Office of the President of John Cabot University, the Department of History and Humanities, and the Department of Political Science and International Affairs.*



ISTITUTO STORICO  
ITALIANO  
PER IL MEDIO EVO

AMERICAN ACADEMY  
IN ROME

**Friday, March 28, 9:30-10:00**

**Aula Magna Renella & N.C.1.3**

**Welcome Remarks**

Fabrizio Conti, John Cabot University

Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri, University of Urbino Carlo Bo

Serena Di Nepi, Sapienza University of Rome

Umberto Longo, Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medioevo and Sapienza University of Rome

**10:00-11:00**

**Aula Magna Renella & N.C.1.3**

**Opening Keynote Lecture**

**“False Memories, Invented Histories, and the Historian’s Obligation to the Past and Present”**

Patrick Geary, Institute for Advanced Study - Princeton

**11:00-11:30 Coffee Break**

\* Aula Magna Renella, N.C.1.4, and N.C.1.3 are located on JCU's new campus at **11 Lungo Tevere Sanzio Raffaello**, Rome (RM) 00153, Italy.



**Friday, March 28, 11:30-13:30**

**Aula Magna Renella**

**Medievalism and Nation Building between  
Western and Eastern Europe**

Chair: Tommaso Zerbi, University of Edinburgh

Salvatore Liccardo, ERC Synergy Grant HistoGenes – University of Vienna, “Myth and History of the Antes: An Origin Story between Imperial Rhetoric, Marxism, Nation Building, and Eurasianism”

Donato Sitaro, University of Naples “Federico II”, “Teutonic Brothers and Aggressive Aborigines: Nineteenth-century Attitudes Towards the End of Roman Britain”

Huub Kurstjens, Dutch Institute for Educational Measurement, “Frederick II: From Mythomoteur to Mythopantom: Identity, Mythologization, Nationalism and Regionalism”

**N.C.1.4**

**State Formation and Nationalism between  
Western Europe and Russia**

Chair: Vincenzo Tedesco, University of Messina / Central European University – Budapest/Vienna

Olga Kalashnikova, CEU Democracy Institute / University of Turin, “Eternal History of Rus(sia): Rurik and the Myth of State Formation in Russian Political Discourse (2011-2024)”

Carlos Llamedo Gutiérrez, Sorbonne Université, “Russia, France and Spain. A Proposal for a Comparative Study in the Medieval Turn of Modern-Day Nationalism”

Olga Kozubska, Central European University – Budapest/Vienna / Institute of Comparative Urban History (IStG) Münster, “Magdeburg Law: Medieval Phenomenon in the Public Memory and Political Discourse of modern Ukraine”

**N.C.1.3**

**The Iberian Peninsula**

Chair: Eszter Salgó, John Cabot University

Ayse Naz Bulamur, Boğaziçi University, “Rendering the Spanish Civil War as Medieval”

Pedro Martins, NOVA School of Social Sciences and Humanities - Lisbon, “The uses of the Middle Ages in Contemporary Portuguese Right-Wing Nationalist and Far-Right Movements: The Cases of Chega and Reconquista”

Paula Almeida Mendes, University of Porto, “Political Uses of the Medieval Past in Portugal: Espelho de Lusitanos (1643) by António Veloso de Lira and the Legitimation of Power”

Alessandro Micocci, University of Genoa, “The Myth of the “Good” Colonial Portuguese from the Reconquista to Tourism Rebranding. The Monuments in Lisbon and the Defense of the Medieval Stereotypes in Contemporary Portugal”



**Friday, March 28, 15:00-16:30**

**GK11**

**Architecture and Building**

Chair: Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri, University of Urbino Carlo Bo

Guido Zucconi, IUAV - Venice, "Shaping a New National Style for Unified Italy: The Middle Ages as a Main Source and the Building of the New City Halls"

Irene Giustina, University of Brescia, "Between Civic Memory and Progress. Neo-medieval Public Architectural Culture in Brescia through Some Exemplary Works of Antonio and Giovanni Tagliaferri"

Naomi Ruth Pitamber, Clark University, "Culturally Definitive, Yet Divisive: The Architectural and Religious Heritage of al-Haram al-Sharif / Temple Mount in Jerusalem"

Cosmin Minea, Masaryk University, "Old Buildings for Modern Times: The Revival of the Past Through Restoration of Monuments in Romania and Serbia in the Late 19th Century"

**16:30-17:00 Coffee Break**

**GK12**

**The Reuse of Medieval Narratives in Early-Modern Times**

Chair: Giulia Lovison, Scuola Normale Superiore Pisa

Michele Camaioni, Roma Tre University, "A Matter of Precedence. Early Modern Franciscans and the Use of Medieval Past in the Controversy on Missions in America and China with the Jesuits (XVII cent.)"

Vincenzo Tedesco, University of Messina / Central European University – Budapest/Vienna, "Reusing Hagiographies for Political and Religious Purposes. The case of Trajan's Legend Between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance"

Hanna Feuer, Central European University – Budapest/Vienna, "The Emperor Beneath the Papal Foot: The Legend of Frederick Barbarossa and Pope Alexander III in the Context of the German Reformation"

**GK13**

**Political Identities Across the Two Sides of the Adriatic Sea**

Chair: Vincent Ferré, Sorbonne Nouvelle University (Paris 3)

Izidor Janžekovič, Harvard University, "The Nationalistic History and Archaeology in Mid-War and Post-War Yugoslavia"

Șerban V. Marin, National Archives of Romania, "Clash of Civilizations in Venice. The Case of Attila"

Igor Vranić, University of Zagreb, "Medieval Narratives as Tools for Daily Political Struggles: The Role of Historiography in Early 20th Century Zagreb"

\* Aula Magna Regina, G.K.1.1, G.K.1.2 and G.K.1.3 are located on JCU's Guarini campus at **Via della Lungara, 233, 00165 Roma RM**



**Friday, March 28, 17:00-18:30**

**GK13**

**Medieval Narratives in the Russian Context**

Chair: Olga Kalashnikova, CEU Democracy Institute  
/ University of Turin

Dmitry V. Shlapentokh, Indiana University,  
“Medieval Discourse of Alexander Dugin”

Aleksandr V. Rusanov, Bielefeld University, “‘Ours’  
and ‘Aliens’, Politicized and Depoliticized Middle  
Ages in Russian Local Memorial Practices”

Anna Zadora, Strasbourg University, “Perestroika  
and the First References on Belarusian History”

**GK12**

**Interplay of Religious, Cultural, and Political  
Narratives**

Chair: Naomi Ruth Pitamber, Clark University

Pankaj Kumar Singh, Ambedkar University,  
“Contested Sacred Topographies and Political  
Mobilization: The Role of Medieval Temple  
Desecration Narratives in Contemporary Indian  
Politics”

Antonio Cuciniello, Università Cattolica Milan,  
“Christian-Muslim Dialogue: Between Past History  
and Present History”

Tommaso Zerbi, University of Edinburgh, “A Tale of  
Three Empires: Architecture, Rome, and the Cultural  
Politics of Historicism from the British to Mussolini”

**GK11**

**Medievalism and Music, Philosophy, Economy**

Chair: Fabrizio Conti, John Cabot University

Paolo Prato, John Cabot University and Roma Tre  
University, “The Discreet Charm of Revival: The  
Middle Ages Reinvented in Popular Music (A Brief  
Love Affairs in the Seventies)”

Alexander Jordan, Metropolitan University Prague,  
“Thomas Carlyle’s Medievalism Reconsidered”

Alessandro Signorini, John Cabot University, “From  
Medieval Guilds to modern AI: Historical Parallels in  
Managing Innovation Resistance and Employment  
Disruption”



**Friday, March 28, 19:00-20:00**

**GK11**

**Keynote Lecture**

**“The Modern Uses of Medieval and Renaissance Narratives of Enslavement and Sexual Violence”**

Tamar Herzig, Tel Aviv University

**Saturday, March 29, 10:00-11:00**

**Aula Magna Regina**

**Keynote Lecture**

**“Political Time Traveling - Middle Ages Reloaded: Hungarian and Russian Examples”**

Gábor Klaniczay, Central European University – Budapest/Vienna

**11:00-11:30 Coffee Break**

**Saturday, March 29, 11:30-13:30**

**Aula Magna Regina**

**Medieval Narratives in Modern Political Discourse**

Chair: Alessandro Micocci, University of Genoa

Balázs Nagy, Eötvös Loránd University, “The Mongol Invasions in the Discourse of the Twentieth-Century Hungarian Politics”

Nelson Lewis Bennett, Central European University – Budapest/Vienna, “A Fictional Narrative, A Real Call to Arms: The Clash of Civilizations Narrative Reimagined for the American Alt-Right”

Felipe Brandi, NOVA University - Lisbon, “The Medievalist Historian and the Political Uses of History. On Georges Duby and His Campaign Against Right-Wingers”

**Boardroom**

**Religious, Political, and Literary Narratives**

Chair: Huub Kurstjens, Dutch Institute for Educational Measurement

Luca Barison, Georgetown University, “Barbarians at the Gates, Barbarians Inside the Gates. The Wewelsburg and the Nazi Barbaric Middle Ages”

Levente Seláf, Eötvös Loránd University, “The Defamation of Charity. The Posthumous Sufferings of Saint Martin in the Mouth of Hungarian Populist Propaganda”

Elodie Burle-Errecade, Aix-Marseille University, “A Middle Ages Under the Magnifying Glass: Enlarging to Reveal”

**G11**

**Medievalism and Politics in Comparative Perspectives**

Chair: Fabrizio Conti, John Cabot University

Claire Dillon, American Academy in Rome and Columbia University, “Constructing Mediterranean Medievalism in Italian Africa”

Ibrahim Al-Marashi, California State University San Marcos, “Saddam as Crusader”

Ansil Kanjirathinkal Muhammed, Jawaharlal Nehru University – New Delhi, “From ‘Hyderabad’ to ‘Bhagyanagar’: A Modern Perspective on Urban Nomenclature, Political Contestation, and Cultural Memory”





**Saturday, March 29, 15:00-16:30**

**GG1**

**Identity Formation Through Folklore and Art**

Chair: Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri, University of Urbino Carlo Bo

Giulia Lovison, Scuola Normale Superiore Pisa, “Do Witches Still Exist? Politics, Religion, and Society”

Francesca Vera Romano, Sapienza University of Rome, “Superstition and Identity: Ecclesiastical Authorities and Greek Minorities in Early Modern Southern Italy”

Marina Bernardi, Roma Tre University – UPEC Paris Créteil, “Antonello da Messina: Painter, Saviour and Saint. Recovering the Memory of Messina, Promoting Sicilian Identity”

**G11**

**Medievalism in Literature**

Chair: Levente Seláf, Eötvös Loránd University

Davide Iacono, PRIN “Framing Medievalism” – University of Urbino Carlo Bo, “‘Disarmato, l’umile sarà ulteriormente umiliato’: Medievalism and Political Struggle in the Eymerich Cycle by Valerio Evangelisti”

Giancarlo Tursi, University of California Santa Barbara, “Dante, Prophet of Fascism”

Fiona McIntosh-Varjabédian, University of Lille, “Medieval Communal Freedom: The Political and Literary Stakes of Another Tradition of Freedom”

Hugo Lacoue-Labarthe, Sorbonne Nouvelle University, “Translating, Rewriting and Editing the Eddas, a Necessarily Political Endeavour? From Tolkien to the Contemporary French Editorial Field”

**Boardroom**

**The Balkans**

Chair: Balázs Nagy, Eötvös Loránd University

Tea Hodaj, Universität Flensburg, “Medieval Narratives, Ottoman Legacy, and the Balkan Conflicts of the 90s: A Historical Continuum”

Domagoj Krpan, University of Rijeka, “King Tomislav and Gregory of Nin in Modern Croatian Discourse”

Dženan Dautović, University of Tuzla, “The Most Potent Tool: The Use and Abuse of the Bosnian Church in Political Systems of Modern Bosnia and Herzegovina”

**16:30-17:00 – Coffee Break**



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**Saturday, March 29, 17:00-19:30**

**Aula Magna Regina**

Student Presentations / Final Roundtable Discussion

Concluding Remarks



This conference is organized in the framework of the Project of National Interest (PRIN) FRAME Framing Medievalisms: Historiography, Cultural Heritage, Media Communication and Languages in Italy (1980-2022) [Project code: 2022HMH5MJ; CUP: B53D23001570006], funded by the European Union-NextGeneration EU

