



**JOHN CABOT
UNIVERSITY**

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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

Via della Lungara 233, Rome

Keynote Speakers:

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

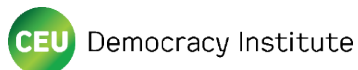
The Organizing Committee:

- 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.



Democracy Institute



ISTITUTO STORICO
ITALIANO
PER IL MEDIO EVO

AMERICAN ACADEMY
IN ROME

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

Aula Magna

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

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

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

Aula Magna

**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”

GK11

**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”

GK12

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"



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

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

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



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

Aula Magna

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

