

Navigazioni et Viaggi, Raccolti da MS. Giov. Batista Ramusio. In Venetia, appresso i Giunti, 1613, vol. I. Leo Africanus's description of Africa (Biblioteca Riccardiana, Florence, Stamp. 11005; reproduced with permission from the Italian Ministry of Culture).

Hassan ibn Muhammad al-Wazzan al-Gharnati and the Diasporic Worlds of the Early Modern Mediterranean

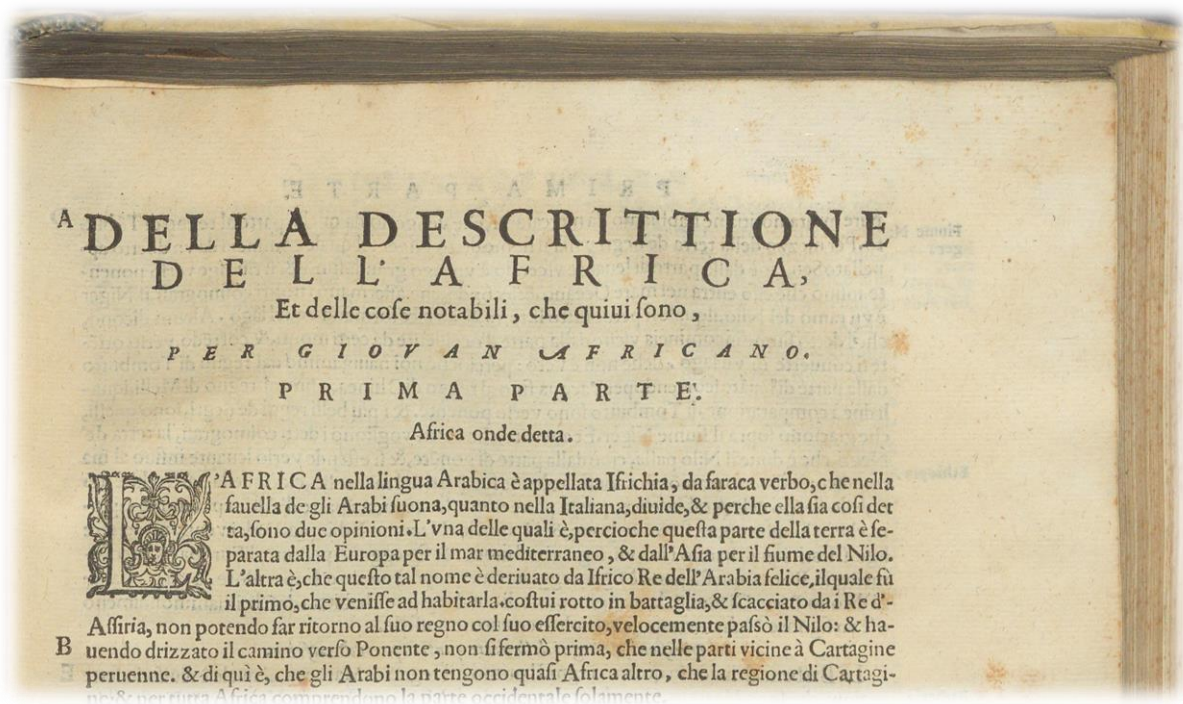
Granada, 27 March 2023

Organizers / conveners:

- **Andrew Hadfield** (U. of Sussex, Sussex Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, School of Media, Arts and Humanities)
- **Giovanni Tarantino** (U. of Florence), chair of the People in Motion COST Action
- **José María Pérez Fernández** (U. of Granada), leader of the PIMo Work Group Paper in Motion
- **Carmen Caballero Navas** (U. of Granada)

* Organized with the support of the Department of English and German Philologies of the U. of Granada

This seminar will focus on the Mediterranean world in which Hassan ibn Muhammad al-Wazzan al-Gharnati lived, with a focus upon the interaction between Christian, Islamic and Jewish communities and the ways in which al-Wazzan – alongside other transcultural figures like him – moved between them. Al-Wazzan al-Gharnati was born in Granada, moved to North Africa, was then kidnapped by pirates and worked in Rome for Pope Leo X. Known in Europe as Leo Africanus, he owes his fame to his *Cosmography* of Africa, which influenced how early modern Europeans viewed the continent well into the eighteenth century. We will approach al-Wazzan against the rich background of Mediterranean diasporas, the frequent shifts of religious and political allegiances and identities they brought about, and the emotional traumas provoked by forced displacement. These exchanges across languages, religious faiths, and cultural outlooks took place simultaneously with frequent reformulations of the texts and the icons employed by each of the cultures that surrounded the wider Mediterranean to make sense of each other. They materialized in the documents, the texts, the disciplines, the ideas, and the objects that recorded them, which included history and cartography, epistolography and music, alongside practices such as translation, language teaching, trade, diplomacy and religious indoctrination.



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Programme

9:30 – 10:00

Welcome and opening remarks – José María Pérez (University of Granada) and Giovanni Tarantino (University of Florence)

10:00 – 10:30

Richard Oosterhoff (University of Edinburgh)
The economic imaginary of Leo Africanus

10:30 – 11:00

Anthony Ossa-Richardson (University College London)
Late Mamluk Egypt in the Early Modern imaginary

11:00 – 11:30

Coffee break

11:30 – 12:00

Andrew Hadfield (University of Sussex)
John Pory (1572-1633)

12:00 – 12:30

José María Pérez Fernández (University of Granada)
Captivated by a barbaric language: Nicolas Clenardus's pilgrimage from Louvain to Fez via Granada

12:30 – 13:30

Questions and comments for the morning session (chair and respondent for the morning session, Brian Cummings, University of York)

13:30 – 15:00

Lunch

15:00 – 15:30

Carmen Caballero Navas (University of Granada)
Ordinary women on the move. Female Jewish diaspora around the Mediterranean

15:30 – 16:00

Renée Levine Melammed (The Schechter Institute, Jerusalem)

Two Iberian Jewish Women Relocate to Mediterranean Diasporas (online)

16:00 – 16:30

Coffee break

16:30 – 17:00

Dwight Reynolds (University of California Santa Barbara)

Musical Migrations Across and Around the Mediterranean, 15th-16th centuries (online)

17:00 – 17:30

Oumelbanine Zhiri (University of California San Diego)

Hasan al-Wazzân – Leo Africanus and storytelling (online)

17:30 – 18:30

Questions and comments for the afternoon session (chair and respondent for the afternoon session, Ann Thomson, European University Institute).

Closing remarks by Giovanni Tarantino

Speakers and abstracts

(in order of intervention)

The economic imaginary of Leo Africanus **Richard Oosterhoff** (University of Edinburgh)

Under his adopted Christian name of Leo Africanus, al-Hassan ibn Muhammad al-Wazzan regularly appears in the footnotes of books on how Atlantic economies came to encounter and use Africa. Usually approaching al-Wazzan through the translation of John Pory published in 1600, these studies tend to use *The Cosmography and Geography of Africa* as a hoard of striking statements about skin colour, slavery, or the value of exotic merchandise. Useful as such studies may be, what is missing is a more comprehensive sense of the framework of mercantile and economic assumptions that Leo Africanus presented to his reader, what I call his economic imaginary, and attempt to sketch it in this talk.

Richard Oosterhoff teaches early modern history at the University of Edinburgh. He has published widely on the history of knowledge, especially the early modern mathematical disciplines and the cultural history of ingenuity. Early in 2023 Penguin Classics is publishing a new English translation of Africanus / al-Wazzan's *Cosmography and Geography of Africa*, which he completed with Anthony Ossa-Richardson.

Late Mamluk Egypt in the Early Modern Imaginary **Anthony Ossa-Richardson** (University College London)

Egypt holds an ambiguous place in Leo Africanus's *Cosmography*, being both in and out of Africa. His account of it is unique in the book in that it is explicitly structured as a travel along the Nile from the Mediterranean coast to Aswan in the south. It is also noteworthy in that it represents a snapshot of a culture and of the Mamluk court just before the invasion of the Ottomans in 1517; indeed, Leo was present in Rosetta when Selim himself passed through after conquering Cairo. In this talk I shall consider his description of the country, and especially of Cairo, in comparison to several near-contemporary accounts by Europeans: two pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land, Arnold von Harff and Felix Fabri, and two professional humanist scholars, Pierre Belon and Guillaume Postel.

Anthony Ossa-Richardson is primarily interested in the expression of ideas in literature—a category including critical, philosophical and historiographical writing—and in the negotiation of meaning by its readers. He has published on the satirist Thomas Nashe, the Elizabethan poet Sir John Davies, pagan religion, Renaissance humanism, and the Hafsid sultan Muley al-Hasan, among others. In March 2023, Penguin Classics will publish Anthony's translation (co-authored with Dr Richard Oosterhoff at the University of Edinburgh) of the earliest book about Africa printed in Europe, *The Cosmography and Geography of Africa*, by the Moroccan diplomat al-Hasan al-Wazzan, better known as Johannes Leo Africanus. This work was written in Italian in the 1520s and first published in 1550; the new translation will be the first version in any language to return to the original manuscript of 1526.

John Pory (1572-1633)
Andrew Hadfield (University of Sussex)

In this talk I will explore the life and significance of John Pory, Hakluyt's protegee, who was the English translator of *The History and Description of Africa*. Pory, therefore, played a pivotal role in the dissemination of the definitive representation of Africa in England from the late sixteenth to well into the eighteenth century, one that concentrated on the North African sub-Saharan area of the continent. Pory was also active in the Virginia Company and travelled to America in 1619 when he became secretary of the Virginia Company. Accordingly, Pory has recently been called 'America's first racist' by Ibram X. Kendi, for his involvement in the early years of the transatlantic slave trade and belief in the 'curse theory' of African blackness resulting from the descent from Ham. I will explore the relationship between Pory's translation and his practical involvement in English colonialism in Virginia to see whether his writing can be related to his actions.

Andrew Hadfield is Professor of English at the University of Sussex and a Fellow of the British Academy. He is the author of a number of studies of early modern literature, culture and history, including *Literature, Travel and Colonialism in the English Renaissance, 1540-1625* (1998), *Shakespeare and Republicanism* (2005), *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (2012), *Lying in Early Modern English Culture from the Oath of Supremacy to the Oath of Allegiance* (2017), and *Literature and Class from the Peasants Revolt to the French Revolution* (2021). A new edition of *Amazons, Savages and Machiavels: Travel and Colonial Writing in English, 1550-1630*, edited with Mat Dimmock, appeared in 2022.

**Captivated by a barbaric language: Nicolas Clenardus's pilgrimage from
Louvain to Fez via Granada**
José María Pérez Fernández (University of Granada)

Nicolas Clenardus (Diest, ca. 1493/4) was a Flemish humanist educated at the University of Louvain and the author of practical Greek, Latin, and Hebrew grammars who soon developed a strong desire to learn Arabic. With this aim in mind, he travelled Southwards on a pilgrimage that would take him first to Spain (1531-1533), then Portugal (1533-1538), and finally back to Spain, where he acquired more advanced skills in Arabic with help from a Moorish slave in Granada. Driven by his desire to acquire Arabic manuscripts and improve his knowledge of the culture and language, he set off for Morocco in 1540. He settled in the Jewish quartier of Fez for about 15 months until his return to Granada in 1541, where he died the following year. These travels can be traced in his correspondence, first published in 1550 with the eloquent title *Nicolai Clenardi Peregrinationum ac de Rebus Machometicis Epistolae Elegantissimae*. These autobiographical letters also provide a detailed description of the method he used to teach himself Arabic as they illustrate the ways in which a Northern European humanist educated in the grammatical and doctrinal traditions of Valla and Erasmus approached Muslim culture and the *barbaric language* by which he felt both *captivated* and *inebriated*, to use his own words. Alongside the biographies of Juan Latino (a black African slave who became a neo-Latin poet) and al-Wazzan al-Gharnati, Clenardus's life bears witness to Granada as a crossroads for exchanges of all sorts between Europe and Africa during the sixteenth century.

José María Pérez Fernández teaches at the University of Granada. He works on comparative literature, translation studies and in general early modern culture, with a particular focus lately on translation as communication, the joint impact of paper and print, as well as methods and strategies for the generation and transmission of information and knowledge. He is the author, with Edward

Wilson-Lee of *Hernando Colón's New World of Books: Toward a Cartography of Knowledge* (Yale, 2021). He is currently working on a book on early modern translations of Thucydides between Lorenzo Valla and Thomas Hobbes for Oxford University Press. He is also one of the editors of the forthcoming edition of Hernando Colón's *Libro de los Epítomes* (also for OUP). He joined the PIMo Project in 2019, where he leads the "Paper in Motion" work group.

Ordinary women on the move. Female Jewish diaspora around the Mediterranean

Carmen Caballero Navas (University of Granada)

Scholars tend to agree that medieval Jews should be regarded as an essentially diasporic community. Indeed, throughout the Middle Ages, they often migrated or travelled; not only due to exile and persecution, but for many other different reasons such as pilgrimage, trade, study or in search of better living conditions. As in many other areas of history, we typically assume that travellers were men. However, Jewish women travelled widely, both by sea and land, willingly and involuntarily, usually accompanying their families, but sometimes also on their own. This paper aims to give visibility to ordinary Jewish women who undertook journeys and to shed light on the reasons or circumstances that led them to do so. I shall draw on a few case studies which, through unexpected sources, present us with the names and/or accounts of women who set out from their places of origin either for long periods of time or permanently. By 'unexpected sources' I mean documents that do not appear to be the most likely records of travel accounts, in contrast to travel books or letters, but which—while dealing with other issues—sometimes unintentionally provide information about women who were far away from their place of origin. These cases will enable us to ask fresh questions regarding the travel experiences of Jewish women and providing answers on what prompted them to set out on the journey or to change the location of their dwelling. These new case studies should contribute to the gradual incorporation of the experiences of ordinary women into the historical narrative of the Jewish diaspora or migration.

Dr. Carmen Caballero Navas is a Senior Lecturer of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at the University of Granada. Her research focuses mainly on Hebrew textual production on women's health care in the Mediterranean West during the Middle Ages, and on the historical experience of Jewish women, especially but not exclusively as recipients and givers of medical care. She is author of *The Book of Women's Love Jewish Medieval Medical Literature on Women. Sefer ahavat nashim* (2004), and co-editor with Esperanza Alfonso of *Late Medieval Jews Identities. Iberia and Beyond* (2010). She is currently working on a book on *Sefer ha-yosher*, a Hebrew book of medicine written at the end of the 13th century.

Two Iberian Jewish Women Relocate to Mediterranean Diasporas

Renée Levine Melammed (The Schechter Institute, Jerusalem)

The exile of the Jews from Spain in 1492 and the forced conversion of the Jews of Portugal in 1497 led to the creation of a number of Mediterranean diasporas for these Iberian Jews. Among these exiles and emigres were two outstanding women whose lives and actions reflect the fragility of living a displaced life. Benvenida Abravanel relocated to various locales in Italy, intermingling with the nobility. Her contemporary, Dona Gracia Mendes, left Portugal for Antwerp, continued eastward,

eventually settling in Constantinople. These lives uncover shifts of identities, allegiances and culture which highlight the essence of the Jewish Iberian Mediterranean diasporas of the sixteenth century.

Renée Levine Melammed is a professor of Jewish History at the Schechter Institute in Jerusalem whose fields of research include the lives of conversos, Sephardi and Oriental Jewish women and 20th century Salonikan Jewry. Her current project deals with women's lives as reflected in the Cairo Geniza, in particular, through letters. She has published numerous articles and three books: *Heretics or Daughters of Israel: The Crypto-Jewish Women of Castile* (Oxford, 1999); *A Question of Identity: Iberian Conversos in Historical Perspective* (Oxford, 2004); and *An Ode to Salonika: The Ladino Verses of Bouena Sarfatty* (IUP, 2013) and is the academic editor of *Nashim*.

Musical Migrations Across and Around the Mediterranean, 15th-16th centuries

Dwight Reynolds (University of California Santa Barbara)

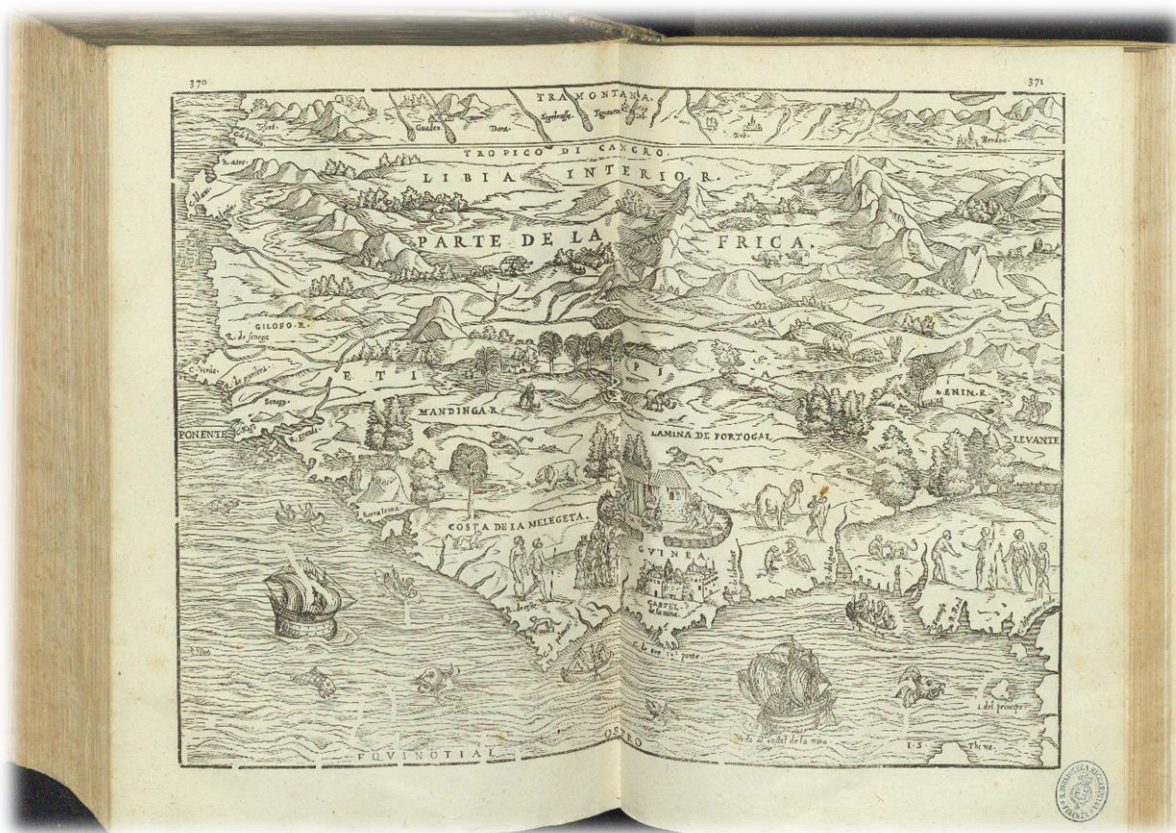
This paper will trace threads of the complex network of interacting musical traditions that spanned the Mediterranean during the era of Hassan ibn Muhammad al-Wazzan al-Gharnati. Reflecting al-Wazzan's own journey from Iberia to North Africa to Italy, we will follow a number of 'musical voyages' in various directions, including 'Moorish' and Jewish musicians performing in the northern Christian kingdoms of Iberia, Muslim and Jewish musical diasporas from Iberia to North Africa and further east, as well as Iberian musical contacts with southern Italy.

Dwight F. Reynolds is Professor of Arabic language and literature at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is the author of *Heroic Poets, Poetic Heroes: The Ethnography of Performance in an Arabic Oral Epic Tradition* (1995), *Arab Folklore: A Handbook* (2007), *The Musical Heritage of al-Andalus* (2021), *Medieval Arab Music and Musicians* (2022), as well as editor and co-author of *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* (2001), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Arab Culture* (2015), and co-editor co-author of *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, Volume 6: The Middle East* (2002), *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: the Post-Classical Period* (2006), *Bestsellers and Masterpieces: The Changing Medieval Canon* (2022), and *Ṭarab: Music, Ecstasy, Emotion, and Performance* (forthcoming).

Hasan al-Wazzân – Leo Africanus and storytelling Oumelbanine Zhiri (University of California San Diego)

The *Cosmographia dell' Affrica* (as the work is titled in its only manuscript) is a very rich text, which can boast a great variety of content. Its geographical descriptions and historical accounts are justly celebrated and widely quoted. Another mode of writing is also prominent: this text contains many stories, many tales, many narratives, some of which have circulated widely in Europe. These stories and tales are themselves quite diverse. Some narratives make historical events more vivid, and found their sources in books and chronicles, when the events in question are ancient, or in informants' or even protagonists' accounts, when they concern recent history. Some anecdotes are autobiographical, illustrating the adventurous life of Wazzân. Other stories are apparently told for the sheer pleasure of storytelling, to amuse and entertain, to enlighten or obfuscate. I will propose a reflection on the place that this mode of writing holds in al-Wazzân's project, and in his text.

Oumelbanine Zhiri is Professor at the University of California, San Diego, where she teaches French, Arabic, and Comparative literature, as well as World History. She has published books and articles on Leo Africanus and on François Rabelais, on Arabic travelogues to Europe, and on the cultural history of Europe and North Africa in the early modern period. Her forthcoming book on the Morisco writer and translator Ahmad al-Hajarî, a project situated at the intersection of travel literature, Orientalism, and science and technology studies, will be published next year by the University of California Press.



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