

“... from Arabia, another deluge, that of the Mahomedans, sweeps in succession over the fair countries forming the eastern half of the [Roman] empire, creating there also a . . . desolation. Gradually all that is left of the art and letters of the Roman Empire takes refuge in Constantinople, where it remains shut up, surrounded west, north, east, and south by the barbarian flood.”<sup>1</sup>

## INTELLECTUAL RATIONALE

Current histories of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries omit some of the overt bias against Islam inherent in past efforts to define the Renaissance. Scholars no longer consider the Renaissance solely as the rebirth of art and literature after a period of cultural darkness imposed by marauding Muslims. Instead, they build on a model of constant exchange between Islamic and European courts, rulers, merchants, travelers, diplomats, and artists during these centuries.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, remnants of these earlier paradigms fuel powerful narratives in the historiography of many introductory college courses, especially in surveys of art, literature, and history of the Western world and are indeed often implicit when the term “Renaissance” is invoked.<sup>3</sup>

“Re-mapping the Renaissance: Exchange between Early Modern Islam and Europe,” a three-week summer institute for college and university teachers, scheduled for June 13 through July 2, 2010, at the University of Maryland, will interrogate pervasive views of the European Renaissance of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries as a purely European rediscovery of Greco-Latin antiquity. Participants will consider much wider contact—traveling in both directions—between Renaissance Europe and the world of Islam. Furthermore, the seminar will demonstrate that the trade conducted by the Italian city-states was not exclusively an inheritance from the Roman Empire. Rather, it was also the legacy of the civilizations of the Mamluk and the Ottoman empires and their thriving systems of foreign trade. Those trading networks, in turn, became conduits for the export not only of products but also of ideas, scientific discoveries, and artistic exchange. This seminar will investigate that legacy.

The topic for this seminar grows out of conversations with faculty at the University of Maryland and also out of suggestions from faculty participating in summer institutes hosted by the Center for Renaissance & Baroque Studies over the past five years. Those institutes, funded by the Maryland State Department of Education, allowed high school teachers to study a number of cross-cultural exchanges. (Visit [www.crbs.umd.edu/crossingborders/index-all.shtml](http://www.crbs.umd.edu/crossingborders/index-all.shtml) for complete program descriptions.) In the scholarly presentations associated with all of these institutes, cultural and artistic exchange between European and Muslim societies emerged as a central theme.

The scholarly community has, in its turn, been influenced by the outstanding exhibitions sponsored by area art galleries over the course of these last few years. These exhibitions have illuminated the links between Europe and Islam most tellingly, and have been especially fruitful in their illustration of representations of exchange. They have included *Caliphs & Kings: The Art & Influence of Islamic Spain* (Freer and Sackler Galleries, 2004); *Artistic Exchange: Europe and the Islamic World* (National Gallery of

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<sup>1</sup>Young, *The Medici*, vol. 1, 1913, 1-2.

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, Jardine and Brotton, *Global Interests*, 2000; Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*, 2002; Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza*, 2002; Gunn, *First Globalization*, 2003; MacLean, ed., *Re-Orienting the Renaissance*, 2005; Davis, *Trickster Travels*, 2006.

<sup>3</sup>Similar definitions emerge, to some extent, in recent efforts to define and categorize “Europeanization,” such as *Rethinking Europe* by Delanty and Rumford, 2005, which builds on Delanty’s earlier work, *Inventing Europe*, 1995.

Art, USA, 2004-5); *Iraq & China: Ceramics, Trade, and Innovations* (Freer and Sackler Galleries, 2004); *Fountains of Light: Islamic Metalwork from the Nuhad Es-Said* (Freer and Sackler Galleries, 2006-7); *Encompassing the Globe: Portugal in the World in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Freer and Sackler Galleries, Museum of African Art, 2007); and *Muraqqa': Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin* (Freer and Sackler Galleries, 2008). Many of these exhibitions are now archived online. The cultural artifacts displayed at these exhibitions revealed, again and again, the inspiration provided by Islamic techniques and production practices, either as prototypes for European goods or as the subjects of representation.

During these institutes, the faculty members who offered lectures and the curators who designed these exhibitions marveled at the opportunity to learn from one another, across disciplines, and agreed that their colleagues would benefit from a similarly structured program. They noted that professors are increasingly taking an interdisciplinary approach to examine cultural commerce from a global perspective. It is crucial for scholars of the early modern period to grasp the exchanges that occurred between Islamic and European societies, the intertwining nature of encounters between these societies, and the cultural, artistic, and technological transmission that enabled the European Renaissance to take place in the form that it did. This summer seminar is conceived to meet that need.

## 2. Project Content

The seminar will take as its point of departure the moment in the late fifteenth century when the ancient symbolic mapping of the world, which dominated the medieval view of the world, began to give way to modern mathematical mapping. The world changed cartographically and ideologically as Europeans became more interested in expanding their trading networks. Merchants, diplomats, sailors, seamen, and pirates linked North Africa, Egypt, Syria, Iran, India, China, the East Indies, and Europe in a network of legal and clandestine trade routes, embassies and diplomatic missions. Artists and artisans, too, traveled between East and West, engaging in a transfer of cultural values and artistic and scientific practices during this period. While this topic offers many areas for potential study, this seminar will keep at its center representations of cultural exchange, especially in art and travel literature, and in historical narrative and travel literature of the period.

Each week of the seminar will focus on a particular set of issues. After a welcome reception on Sunday, June 13, 2010, and an introductory workshop and orientation session on Monday, June 14, 2010, participants will spend the remainder of the first week delving into cartography, evolving systems of mapping, and those systems' impact on the period. For the second week of the seminar, they will study trading patterns (recorded in part in travel narratives of the period) and will turn finally, during the third week, to a consideration of material goods, especially luxury goods, as markers of exchange. Throughout the seminar, participants will have blocks of time for their own research; they will also have opportunities to meet with the seminar directors, Judith Tucker and Adele Seeff, on a weekly basis to discuss their projects' progress. The seminar will conclude with a day designed to facilitate synthesis, evaluation, and dissemination.

For complete schedule details, including preliminary reading assignments for each discussion session, please visit [http://www.crbs.umd.edu/programs/re-mapping\\_the\\_renaissance/index.html](http://www.crbs.umd.edu/programs/re-mapping_the_renaissance/index.html).

### WEEK ONE: CARTOGRAPHY

While historians often describe the shifts in European cartographical methods during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, they do not necessarily note the technological impact of Islamic maps and mapping methods on European cartographers, nor do they explore the cartographic developments in the Ottoman Empire more generally. This first week will explore some of the issues that emerge when these cartographic cultures are studied side by side. Alison Sandman, History, James

Madison University, will serve as a guest lecturer for one session and will spend a second morning with participants as they visit the African & Middle Eastern Reading Room and the Geography & Map Reading Room, both at the Library of Congress.

Sandman will begin her lecture session with a brief discussion of medieval European maps and the ways that they portray a world that is explicitly Christian, and were used more to convey the place of humanity in the cosmos rather than surveying geographical topography. She will then survey the rival traditions of cartography, Ptolemaic and traders' maps, generally known as portolan charts. In her discussion of Ptolemaic maps, she will describe the rediscovery of Ptolemaic maps, and how that rediscovery grew both out of contact with the Islamic world and fear of it. She will assess the ways that Ptolemaic maps encouraged the mathematization of the world with the development of projections and graticules and thus encouraged seeing Christendom as but a small part of the world. She will also trace the impact of the development of new trade routes, since increased contact with other peoples, especially in East Africa, forced Europeans to reexamine the organizing principles of the Ptolemaic cosmos.

Sandman will then turn to portolan charts, looking at the tradition derived from maritime maps that used illustrations in blank spots to make cultural claims. From the Catalan Atlas through graphic efforts to record the voyages to the New World and the Spice Islands, Sandman will explore how cartography changed as Europeans engaged more fully with the rest of the world. These charts also reveal the difficulties that Europeans faced as they attempted to reconcile their expectations of Islamic trade networks with their actual encounters with Muslim societies. She will compare parallel mapping traditions in the Ottoman Empire and in Europe in order to contrast the ways these maps depicted the same geographic regions.

At the Library of Congress, Sandman will briefly discuss the printed map tradition as maps became wall decorations and their ethnographic claims about the rest of the world were standardized. Throughout her sessions, Sandman will emphasize the impact of travel in both directions on map design, on conventions of embellishment (often ethnographically inspired), and on the selection of information considered sufficiently important to warrant inclusion. Since the majority of the trade connections were mediated by Islamic societies, this perforce demonstrates the impact of the Islamic world, though Europeans of the time did not acknowledge these influences.

Texts, both primary and secondary, which will anchor the discussion, include pages from *The Piri Reis Map of 1513*, a modern edition of a world map drawn by the Ottoman admiral Piri Reis, edited and discussed by Gregory C. McIntosh (2000); *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, edited by Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman (2007); *First Globalization: The Eurasian Exchange, 1500 to 1800*, by Geoffrey C. Gunn (2003); and selections from *The History of Cartography* series. Here, participants will study excerpts from *Volume 1: Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean*, co-edited by J. Brian Harley and David Woodward (1987); *Volume 2, Book 1: Cartography in the Traditional Islamic and South Asian Societies*, co-edited by J. Brian Harley and David Woodward (1992); and *Volume 3: Cartography in the European Renaissance*, edited by David Woodward (2007).

#### WEEK TWO: TRADING PATTERNS, TRAVEL NARRATIVES

For the second week, the focus will be on cultural encounters between Arab and European travelers and the resulting exchanges in ideas and cultural practices. During the first session on Monday, June 21, 2010, Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, Professor of Persian Language and Literature and Iranian Culture and Civilization and Director of the Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute Center for Persian Studies at the University of Maryland, will provide an overview of some of the travel narratives from the fourteenth centuries so that participants may see the tradition from which later traders' tales emerged. On Tuesday, June 22, 2010, Judith Tucker, Associate Professor of History at Georgetown University and a co-director

for this institute, will discuss trading patterns in the early modern period. On Thursday, June 24, 2010, she will assess the historical record of exchanges of scientific and technological developments that can be traced in European and Arabic travel narratives from the seventeenth century.

The travel writings from both Islamic and European cultures, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, provide rich avenues for comparison. Ahmad bin Qasim described his journey from Morocco to France and Holland in the early seventeenth century, and Ilyas Hanna al-Mawsuli left Baghdad to travel first to Europe and then to Spain's possessions in the New World. Both travelers left rich accounts of their journeys to other shores and their experiences with cultures that felt both familiar and different. They were also close observers of the economic ties between the different regions. Their accounts will be read in conjunction with those of European travelers such as Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, whose *Turkish Letters*, trans. Edward Seymour Forster (1927, 2005), offers one useful counterpoint. As participants read these accounts, they will observe the ways in which travelers discussed "foreign" people and places in light of their assertions about developments and needs—political, cultural, and economic—in their own societies at the time.

Four studies central to this investigation are Jerry Brotton, *Trading Territories: Mapping the Early Modern World* (1997); Evket Pamuk and Jeffrey G. Williamson, *The Mediterranean Response to Globalization before 1950* (2000); Pamela H. Smith and Paula Findlen, *Merchants & Marvels: Commerce, Science, and Art in Early Modern Europe* (2002); Geoffrey C. Gunn, *First Globalization: The Eurasian Exchange, 1500-1800* (2003); and Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries, 1400-1800* (2007). Participants will read selections from these texts.

#### WEEK THREE: MATERIAL GOODS

For art, Islamic material goods—rugs, ceramics, glassware, metalwork—served as markers of luxury and artisanal prowess in Renaissance painting, first in Italian painting and then in Dutch still life and interior room studies by artists such as Vermeer. Early modern Venice, a trade center in the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries, established a market for the consumption of luxury goods. Representations of wealth and status in paintings of the period illustrate the implications of this complicated set of exchanges and reveal some of the ways that Western Renaissance painting was deeply influenced by Islamic trade. As Western artists and artisans strove to emulate their counterparts in Syria, Persia, and Arabia, they developed new techniques (for example, the blue-and-white porcelain now associated with Delft) and traveled, whenever possible, to learn from technical masters in the Islamic world. Gentile Bellini is one such example.

During this third week, Meredith Gill, Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Maryland, will offer one morning session at the University of Maryland and will, later in that week, lead participants on a tour of selected paintings at the National Gallery of Art and the Freer and Sackler Galleries of the Smithsonian Institution. The morning session will frame some of the questions that emerge from a comparison of material artifacts. First, Gill will lead a discussion entitled, "Mutual Reflections: Portraits and Paintings in East and West," that will ask participants to consider the mutual influence between the Ottoman court and Venice as depicted in the Gentile Bellini paintings of Ottoman scholars, sultans, and artists. Then Gill will follow with a second topic, entitled "Lovely Stuff: Representing Material Culture in the Early Modern Interior," which will explore the extent to which the decorative arts record the transmission of culture. Here, particular case-studies of Northern and Southern European art, such as Giovanni Bellini's "Feast of the Gods," will allow Gill to outline for participants how and why Chinese bowls arrived in Europe and were then figured in Bellini's painting. Possible points of discussion might include a consideration of the aesthetic tastes of Alfonso II of Naples, patron of Renaissance poets and builders; the Italian court culture as compared to Eastern courts; concepts of "empire" or of diplomacy; the biases of art critics such as Giorgio Vasari; and primary source material. One exemplary

source is Cyriacus of Ancona's illustrated accounts of his travels throughout the Eastern Mediterranean. This discussion will continue at the National Gallery and the Freer and Sackler Galleries the next day. Texts that will anchor the week's conversation will include Natalie Zemon Davies, *Trickster Travels* (2006), and Rosamond E. Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300-1600* (2002).

This third week will end with a session of reflection. Directors Tucker and Seeff will guide a discussion of the themes that have emerged, however tangentially, in the course of the seminar, evaluate the seminar, assess next steps, and plan any relevant follow-up activities such as dissemination of published materials or a follow-up conference.

Throughout the seminar, days have been set aside for research and reading. Project directors have allowed ample time for consultation with participants about their research projects and potential publications. The schedule also includes opportunities for informal exchange. Directors will facilitate collaboration in whatever ways participants require without imposing onerous burdens on the participants themselves. Organizers have designed simple, quick exercises to assess participants' progress with their research and their well-being as visitors to the University of Maryland campus, and to address any other concerns.

Possible products of this seminar might be a collection of papers or a curriculum source-book so that colleagues in the field might benefit from the work of the seminar. Certainly, an online component will gather resources first for the participants and then for other audiences as appropriate. The Center for Renaissance & Baroque Studies currently incorporates various sorts of publication—a print journal, a published symposium proceedings series, an online database of curricular materials, and an extensive website—that serve as material records of its programs. The Center brings this expertise to this seminar, as well. Please visit [www.crbs.umd.edu](http://www.crbs.umd.edu) for a complete description of Center programs and publications.

### PROJECT FACULTY AND STAFF

Adele Seeff, director of the Center for Renaissance & Baroque Studies and director of Outreach for the College of Arts and Humanities at the University of Maryland, has developed and implemented a variety of successful academic and community-based programs for campus, regional, and national audiences. These interdisciplinary projects range from a triennial symposium series entitled "Attending to Early Modern Women," to thirteen different summer institutes designed to help teachers at all levels work across disciplines. Ten of these programs were offered as residential summer institutes. Two—*Inquisitions and Persecutions in Early Modern Europe and the Americas* (2005; [www.crbs.umd.edu/programs/inquisitions/index.html](http://www.crbs.umd.edu/programs/inquisitions/index.html)) and *Sappho and Lady Mary Wroth* (1994) were funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Her expertise includes building communities of scholars and keeping those communities intact long after an institute itself has disbanded. She has co-edited six volumes of symposium proceedings and now, together with Jane Donawerth (English, University of Maryland) and Diane Wolfthal (Art History, Rice University), co-edits *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. In addition, she has published on Shakespeare performance and reception; she is currently completing a book-length project, provisionally entitled *South African Shakespeares*.

Judith Tucker, Professor of History, Georgetown University, combines an impressive record of administrative experience—most pertinently as Director of Academic Programs in Arab Studies and as Acting Chair of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies—with expertise in researching and teaching Arab Studies; Islamic history and culture; women, the law, and family; modern Arab social history; and the historiography of the Muslim world by Anglophone historians. Tucker has published six monographs, one of which was co-authored with Guity Nashat and two of which have been reprinted. One of those volumes has now been translated into Arabic. Her publications also include numerous essays and contributions to encyclopedias and American Historical Association reference resources. Tucker has

successfully secured a number of research grants, studied extensively in Egypt, and served a five-year term as editor of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. She continues to serve in an advisory capacity for editorial boards and professional societies. She has been active in efforts to align the high school world studies Advanced Placement curriculum with college-level courses. Recent courses she has taught include “Arab Historiography”; “Gender and Empire in the Middle East”; “Introduction to the Arab World”; “Islamic Law: History and Society”; “Islamic Law/Women/Gender”; and “Traveling: European and Middle Eastern Encounters.”

### **PARTICIPANT SELECTION**

An ideal participant group would include college or university faculty in architectural history, art history, geography, history, humanities, languages, literatures, and comparative religions. The seminar in some respects targets those faculty teaching introductory courses and should therefore appeal to community college teachers as well as to faculty at more research-oriented institutions. As an organizational unit, the Center is flexible and well-positioned to handle the application process for the 2010 summer institute, arrangements for dormitory accommodations, and all other logistical details. The Center has experience in recruiting nationwide; six of its institutes have been national, and its symposium series is international.

### **INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT**

The University of Maryland affords participants access to an extensive research library, computer facilities, a campus-wide wireless network, and air-conditioned dormitories, as well as to a dynamic and diverse faculty specializing in early modern studies. The Centers for Persian Studies and for Renaissance & Baroque Studies serve as intellectual resources and community-builders for participating faculty and staff. In addition, the Department of Art History and Archaeology has developed an extensive online image database and is constructing a “Collaboratory,” a space allowing virtual, three-dimensional study of such interiors as the fifteenth-century frescoed panels and the sixteenth-century ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. University of Maryland Libraries subscribe to a number of electronic databases and collections, and these will be available to participants during the institute.

Area resources also serve as an attraction. The University’s location (within walking distance of the Washington, DC, Metro system) will allow participants to spend time at the Folger Shakespeare Library; the National Gallery of Art; the Smithsonian museums, most especially the Freer and Sackler Galleries; the Textile Museum; and the Library of Congress. The Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore is easily accessible by train or car.

“Re-mapping the Renaissance: Exchange between Early Modern Islam and Europe,” will allow sixteen participants to consider deeply the vital relationship between the Islamic and European worlds during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. The experience promises to be groundbreaking. Its impact will be much wider, however, than these fifteen participants. Their students will benefit from the questions participants pursue together, and the collective conversation will in turn help shape the scholarly discourse in a variety of fields. The topic has timeliness evident from recent powerful art exhibitions and flourishing scholarly publications. The Center for Renaissance & Baroque Studies has a wealth of experience in bold and innovative cross-disciplinary program development. “Re-mapping the Renaissance: Exchange between Early Modern Islam and Europe,” promises to be just such a program.