Recent scholarship on the medieval Mediterranean has underlined the importance of Sicily as a prime example to study processes of transcultural exchange and entanglement. The island in the centre of the Mediterranean basin is considered a paradigmatic case for a transcultural society, which received and absorbed elements of different traditions in terms of language, art, administration and also economy. The dynamics of these processes of interaction lie at the core of the conference “Urban Dynamics and Transcultural Communication in Medieval Sicily”.

The contributions will focus on the dynamics of transcultural interaction and the circulation of people, commodities, and ideas in urban centres of Medieval Sicily which functioned as hubs in regional, trans-regional, and in wider Mediterranean networks.

The symposium intends to engage with the following questions:

- How did different groups living in rural and urban areas interact with each other? Which conflicts did arise between minority and majority groups and how did they negotiate compromises?
- How did the political, religious and administrative structures influence the patterns of communication and exchange?
- What means of communication and what kind of media were used?
- In what ways did transcultural contacts become a catalyst for urban development?

Cover picture: De laudibus Messanae by Angelo Callimaco Siculo: Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale, Viti. Em. 55, fol. 18v (with kind permission by Biblioteca Nazionale).
PROGRAMME

Thursday, November 26

9.30–10.00  Vera Nünning / Diamantis Panagiotopoulos
Theresa Jäckh / Mona Kirsch
Welcome and Introduction

Urban Centres and Transcultural Societies
Chair: Nikolas Jaspert

Coffee Break

11.00–11.40  Julia Becker (Heidelberg): Ut omnes habitatores Messane tam latini quam greci et hebreys habeant predictam libertatem. Vita cittadina e cittadinanza a Messina tra Normanni, Angioini e Aragonesi

11.40–12.20  Kristjan Toomaspoeg (Lecce): Palermo in the Late Middle Ages: Territory and Population (13th–15th Centuries)

Lunch Break

A Dynamic Landscape? The Hinterland and its Patterns of Communication
Chair: Jenny Oesterle
13.40–14.20  Alex Metcalfe (Lancaster): Dynamic Landscapes: the View from Monreale

14.20–15.00  Richard Engl (Mainz): A Society on the Move: Muslim Cities in Hohenstaufen Sicily as Places of Migration and Communication

Coffee Break

15.30–16.10  Fabrizio Titone (Bilbao): Catania e le comunità della diocesi. Autorità vescovile e laici nel tardo Medioevo

Nodes of Communication: Merchants, Commodities, and Mediterranean Transfer
Chair: Daniel König
16.10–16.50  Hadrien Penet (Montreuil-sous-Bois): Merchant Communities of Late Medieval Messina (1250–1500)

Coffee Break


17.50–18.30  Mohamed Ouerfelli (Marseille): The Sicilian Overseas Sugar Trade in the Western Mediterranean in the Middle Ages

Friday, November 27

Transcultural Images and Motifs. Discourses and Perception
Chair: Johannes Heil
9.30–10.10  Thomas Dittelbach (Bern): Transforming Messages: Counter Narratives in Norman Art and Architecture

10.10–10.50  Giuseppe Mandalà (Madrid): Città e saperi: qualche riflessione sulla diffusione della cultura araba nella Sicilia medievale

Coffee Break

11.15–11.55  Frederek Musall (Heidelberg): Trans-cultural Criticism – Some Remarks on the Actualities and Problems of a Paradigm

11.55–12.20  Final Discussion and Conclusion