

# **International IDA Project: Images and Deformations of the Alterity**

**second cycle of activity 2023-27**

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## **Purposes of the IDA Project**

The IDA Project (Images and Deformations of the Alterity, in Italian: Immagini e Deformazioni dell'Altro) does not want to ignore the indisputable fact that among the peoples of the Mediterranean - and of that Great Mediterranean which, from Alexander the Great onwards, projects its influence to the gates of India - the image of the Other has been, and in large part continues to be, a deformation (many deformations indeed) of the Other.

A new image of the Other is urgently needed at the beginning of the 21st century, full up with ethnocentrism and racist instincts, but it still needs to be formed in consciences, schools and universities, in the media. A goal of this IDA Project could and should be right here: to give shape to a new image of the Other, starting from the analysis in literature (and not only) of its deformations, which are still too many and too strong.

The IDA Project aims to involve scholars and researchers, especially young, who have just started their adventure in research, in the conviction that they are the first to have an interest in "reforming" the image of the Other. Hence the idea of promoting a network of Mediterranean and Middle East universities by the FIMIM Research Centre of the University of Bologna, a network which includes some of the major centres in the area, starting from Turkey (University of Istanbul and University of Kırklareli), Egypt (University al-Azhar and University of Badr in Kairo) and the Maghreb (University of Blida2-Algeria), Iran (Tehran universities and research centers) and other centers in Balkan (University of Sarajevo) and Caucasian (University of Baku, University of Yerevan) areas.

The IDA Project aims to give priority to research in literature, comparative literature and the history of cultural relations between peoples. Preference will be given to the period from the Middle Ages to the modern and contemporary ages, with particular attention to Euro-Arab exchanges, from the age of the Crusades to today, and to the irano-turkish world, which has always been projected on both the Mediterranean and Central and South Asia. The IDA Project will not neglect the more traditional fields of

"arabicistic", "romanistic", "iranistic", "medieval" or "turcological" studies, but on the contrary has the precise intention of placing them in dialogue with this dimension of exchange often neglected by sector studies, except in particular areas (such as the recent sector of studies on Migranten Literatur or the "cultural studies"). The promoters of IDA Project have the conviction - today increasingly shared - that we are faced with a unique large historical-cultural basin that provides the most appropriate background and the most satisfactory framework for the study of several phenomena, the literary ones in the first place.

### **Thematic areas**

The focus of IDA Project is mainly on literature, comparative literature, history of the cultural relations between the Indo-Mediterranean peoples

The promoters identified three major thematic areas of the IDA Project:

- Literary forms. Comparing themes, motifs and genres (lyric, novel, drama, etc.), from the Middle Ages to today, in the literatures of the Indo-Mediterranean area.
- The identity of the Other (the Saracen, the Farangi, the Migrant, the Colonialist, the Jewish, the Gypsy...) in narrative and travel literature, and in the Migranten Literatur.
- History of translations and receptions in the Indo-Mediterranean world (translations of European authors into Middle Eastern languages and authors from the Middle East and the southern shores of the Mediterranean into European languages).