

# The Ninth International Conference of The Society for the Medieval Mediterranean (SSM)

## *Small Worlds, Big Worlds: Medieval Mediterranean Perspectives*

### Keynote Speakers

**Dan Smail** (Harvard University)

*Practices of Slavery in Mediterranean Europe, 1250-1500*

**Abstract:**

Everywhere in late medieval Mediterranean Europe, it was possible, at least in theory, to purchase and hold an enslaved individual. The traffic in slaves began a noteworthy period of growth in the thirteenth century. In the second half of the fourteenth, the rise of the Black Sea trade led to a significant acceleration. Yet the practice of slavery was never uniform across the region. In some cities, as much as 15 percent of the population may have been enslaved. Elsewhere, the presence of enslaved individuals is scarcely detectable. The significant variation in the degree to which slavery implanted itself in the cities and towns of Mediterranean Europe is a historical phenomenon in search of explanation. Through a survey of practices of slavery in Marseille, a city located in the borderlands of the practice, this lecture seeks to frame a set of questions that could guide research in coming decades.

**Short bio:**

Daniel Lord Smail is Frank B. Baird, Jr. professor of history at Harvard University, where he works on the history and anthropology of Mediterranean Europe between 1100 and 1600 and on deep human history. In recent work, he has been using household inventories from the period to understand transformations in material culture. His most recent book is *Magdalena Coline: A Life Beyond Mediterranean Slavery* (Princeton University Press, 2025).

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**Ana Echevarría** (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia- Spain)

*Facing the Big World: Iberian Perspectives of the Ottoman Lands*

**Abstract:**

Medieval authors did not write anthropology as such. However, the need to explore the encounters with far-away civilizations, especially those who were in a process of expansion, forced medieval authors to face customs, landscapes and identities to match their views. This lecture will focus on the knowledge of Ottomans as reflected in the writings of Iberian writers belonging to different social groups in the kingdom of Castile in the fifteenth century: the royal entourage, Franciscans, and Mudejars. Their views portray the Turks as nomadic people first and great conquerors of Asia later, and the Ottomans as the emerging strong dynasty of Muslim rulers.

**Short bio:**

Ana Echevarria is Professor of Medieval History at the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia in Madrid (Spain). She holds a PhD from the University of Edinburgh. She was one of the PIs of the project "Christian Society under Muslim Rule: Canon Collections from Medieval Spain" funded by the Gerda Henkel Foundation and is now working on a multimedia book "Religious Minorities and Specialized Labour". She is also a member of the Marie Curie Action CIRCE - "InClusive valorisation model foR Controversial cultural hEritage in the Mediterranean Harbours and beyond" (2025-2029).