

## (TRANS)NATIONALISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

### The Oxford Symposium

South East European Studies (Oxford)

The event is organised by *South East European Studies at Oxford* and the *RAMSES 2 Network of Excellence on the Mediterranean*. Sponsored by the *Tsakopoulos Foundation*, Sacramento.

Date: May 26 - 28, 2006.

Location: St Antony's College, University of Oxford.

Application process: Please send your inquiries and application to [seesox@sant.ox.ac.uk](mailto:seesox@sant.ox.ac.uk).

Please note that your application must have reached us by 5 p.m. on February 27, 2006.

The selection committee will inform successful applicants by March 13.

The Oxford Symposium enters its fourth year with a conference on *(Trans)nationalism in the Mediterranean*. After the meetings on *Border Crossings in the Balkans* (2003), *Nationalism, Society and Culture in Post-Ottoman South East Europe* (2004) and on *(Trans)nationalism in South East Europe* (2005), we are expanding our scope to consider critically the issues of (Trans)nationalism in a region of intensive social exchanges and of high symbolical significance, the wider Mediterranean region comprising South East Europe, Turkey, the Middle East and North Africa as well as the littoral EU Member States. Thus conceived the Mediterranean traverses multiple national, socio-cultural and economic dividing lines. These were drawn not only in the course of nation-state formations in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the colonial experiences of the Arab world, but ironically also in the process of regional integration. Some parts of the Mediterranean are included in the EU project, while others are seen as the neighbourhood where the Union can project its soft power. EU members such as Spain, France, Italy and Greece are represented as a container in which conflicts emanating from the poor South and East are brought through the processes of migration.

The Oxford Symposium challenges the hierarchical and Euro-centric mental maps and analyses the Mediterranean through the conceptual lens of (trans)nationalism. As elaborated in the context of South East Europe, (Trans)nationalism refers to social networks and actors transcending or operating across national borders with multiple political, cultural or economic dimensions. Importantly, the networks and actors in question (diasporas, migrants, ethnic minorities, marginalised social groups, amongst others) are not a novel phenomenon. In fact, they are the consequence of an imperial heritage, the processes of anti-colonial struggle, nation-state formation, or of its very failure. A crucial focus of analysis is the interrelated process of internal identity formation through the definition of external Others such as neighbouring countries, the colonial oppressor, the West, Israel, the Orient. The Oxford Symposium, therefore, would like to explore, in a comparative perspective across the wider Mediterranean area, the question of how conflicts over borders (state, ethnic, religious, communal) and territory both generates cross-border identities and solidify ›national‹ or group identities such as the ›Arabs‹ in opposition to the ›Jews‹. Some examples include:

- trans-national communities such as cross-border ethnic groups, minorities (Kurds, Berbers, Roma)
- Religious communities, such the Islamic Umma, the Orthodox oecumene, the Catholic Church and the Jewish world.
- Informal criminal communities such as trafficking or terrorist networks

SEESOX will publish all materials presented at the Oxford Symposium on its website and will facilitate further publications in various academic journals.

#### Conference Details and Application Process

The OS is planned as a two-day conference, with a separate key-note lecture by a leading expert on trans-nationalism in South East Europe. A panel composed of the conveners and members of South East European Studies at Oxford will choose up to 20 papers from advanced doctoral students and young academics. There will be six to seven panels with a chair and a discussant each, based on the cluster of themes emerging from the submitted papers. We are expecting between sixty and eighty attendees. Invited applicants will receive a substantial contribution to their travel and accommodation costs.

OS is soliciting proposals containing original research on the wider Mediterranean Region, South East Europe, including Turkey, in all fields of the social sciences, especially history, anthropology, politics, geography, cultural studies, urban studies, architecture.

Applications should consist of the following items. Please ensure that you follow these guidelines, as incomplete or non-standard applications will not be considered!

- Proposal, of no more than 300 words outlining the paper's key argument
- A brief one-page CV, indicating the applicant's affiliation and full contact details
- A list of publications (one-page maximum). Please ensure that all three items are saved in one Word Document and named *yourfamilyname.doc*.
- Though the OS targets doctoral students and academics, the convenors might consider outstanding applications by advanced master students. In that case the applicants should also submit a letter of reference from their supervisor.

