Università
Ca'Foscari
Venezia

Research fellowships on "Origin stories, memories of migration and the expansion of literacy in the western Persianate world: Hidden narratives of the Safavids and their contemporaries (1500-1700)" - Università Ca' Foscari Venezia
(Italian law 30 December 2010, n. 240, art. 22)

The present document in English is to be considered as merely a summary of the main provisions of the notice of competition, which is available in Italian at the following (link). The text in Italian is considered to be the official text of the notice of competition for all legal intents and purposes and, therefore, the Italian text is definitive in the event that there is a discrepancy between the Italian and English versions.

Description
The Department of Asian and North African Studies at Università Ca' Foscari Venezia invites applications for a fellowship in:
Title: Origin stories, memories of migration and the expansion of literacy in the western Persianate world: Hidden narratives of the Safavids and their contemporaries (1500-1700)
Scientific sector: L-OR/15
Scientific supervisor and tutor: Prof. Stefano Pellò
Duration: 12 months
Abstract:

This project examines the themes of origins and migration in historical and legendary narrative in Safavid and Ottoman lands, and how such narrative changed in the face of changing early modern literary technologies. In the fifteenth century, the Timurid, Ak Koyunlu, and Ottoman dynasties drew upon a series of narratives regarding their shared origins which had first emerged in Mongol historiography, particularly in the widely copied universal history of Rashīd al-Dīn Hamadānī. These stories were centered on the myth and legend of the Oghuz Turks and became a central feature of post-Mongol Persianate historiography throughout the early modern era.

The rise of Ottoman and Safavid hegemony across the Mediterranean, Black Sea, and Iranian spheres led to the marginalization of Oghuz-centric narratives in the face of new official discourses which drew upon the Persianate legacies of Iranian, Turkic, Arab, and Roman rule bolstered by universalist religious claims. However, elements of older popular narrative continued to surface in subtle ways in official sources in Persian and other languages, and to circulate in the overlapping oral realm of both empires. These alternative narratives highlighted tribal migrations and violent displacement over the more lineage-oriented universalist claims foregrounded in the official sources which have also dominated the scholarly treatment of both empires.

This project traces the history of these alternative discourses by focusing on origin stories and migration narratives. Two important themes in this framework are points of origin (both imagined and real) and the reasons for migration. It is known that the historical homeland of the progenitors to the post-Mongol Turkic dynasties was typically described as Central Asia (Tūrān / Torkestān), but Khorasan and the city of Marv in particular feature in a number of oral traditions, a memory which may have been reinforced by later forced migrations under Safavid rulers between the empire's Anatolian and Central Asia frontiers. Most migration narratives refer to a historical moment of chaos and hardship which spurred tribal dispersion and westward movement. The project will explore how this migration narrative changed overtime and spread with the expansion of literacy across Ottoman and Safavid lands. In particular, new technologies and forms of text such as the notebook or small book (jung) changed how popular culture circulated and the way in which migration was inscribed into cultural memory.

The project will also address origins of western Persianate dynasties, which tended to be overshadowed in official historiography by the legendary stories of founding figures Shah Ismail and Osman Ghazi. In the latter case, the enigmatic story of the drowning of Osman Gazi's grandfather, Süleyman Şah, appears to be rooted in eastern Anatolia oral tradition, and will be a topic of further study. The case of the Qezelbāsh coalition also

remains obscure, as historians have uncritically accepted the notion of the swift Safavid mobilization of pre-existing Turkman tribes in eastern Anatolia. The project will ask how narratives of Qezelbāsh origins may reveal a shared historical memory of tribal movement and migration, and how the story of these origins survived and changed with the spread of the written word across Iranian lands.

The project will examine both Persianate court chronicles (e.g. Habīb al-siyar, Jām-i jamāʾīn, etc.) as well as popular traditions such as the stories of Shah Ismail.

The fellowship is intended to provide the successful candidate with the opportunity to pursue their own research while benefiting from the range of expertise at Università Ca' Foscari Venezia.

Who can apply

Prospective candidates are expected to hold a Doctoral degree and to have a suitable professional CV for the requested research activities. Their competences will be evaluated in dialogue with the course of studies and the Doctoral dissertation. Foreign candidates must be proficient in Italian. All candidates must be proficient in Persian, Turkish and English.

Ca' Foscari encourages applications from researchers who have received positive evaluation in all the criteria applicable to funding streams, such as Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions - Individual Fellowships/ERC Starting Grants/FIRB (Italian Fund for basic research investments)/SIR (Scientific Young Independence Research) and the like. Researchers having successfully completed Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions - Individual Fellowships/ERC Starting Grants/FIRB (Italian Fund for basic research investments)/SIR (Scientific Young Independence Research) or similar funded projects are warmly encouraged to apply.

Duration of contracts: 12 months (approximately starting: November 1, 2022).

Stipend: The research fellowship amounts to 19,367 Euros per year, including taxes and social charges.

Deadline for submission of applications: October, 6th, 12.00 noon.

How to apply:

Candidates should submit:
1. The application form.
2. A motivation letter (max 1 page) along with their CV in European format (duly dated and signed) enclosed as one single.pdf file. (link)
3. A copy of a valid identity document (either Identity Card or Passport).
4. (If available) Evaluation Summary Reports of Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions - Individual Fellowships/ ERC Starting Grants/FIRB (Italian Fund for basic research investments)/SIR (Scientific Young Independence Research) individual proposals having passed all the evaluation thresholds.
5. (If available) Details of Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions - Individual Fellowships, ERC Starting Grants, FIRB (Italian Fund for basic research investments)/ SIR Scientific Young Independence Research funded projects.
6. A declaration stating one's availability to participate in the interview remotely (link), which is to be send via email to the following address: ricerca.dsaam@unive.it;
7. For all documents, qualifications, and publications relevant for the selection procedure, please see the notice (link).
All the schemes of the quoted documentation are available on the website (link).

How to submit your application

Applications should be submitted through the online procedure:

https://apps.unive.it/domandeconcorso-en/accesso/06102022dsaam

The candidate (after the uploading) will receive a submission number and an e-mail acknowledging receipt of his/her application.

The candidate (if necessary) could access the procedures for updating any data and materials by the link provided by the e-mail. Updates must be made no later than the deadline (October 6, 2022, 12:00pm).

Please note that the candidate can contact the University for administrative support up until 24 hours prior to the deadline.

Please note that, in light of the possibility that there will be a high number of applications and / or the large files of the documents uploaded by the candidates into the system, there could be a slowing of the online procedure. It is, therefore, recommended to begin the process as soon as possible.

NB: the University does not take on responsibility for wrong or late communication of addresses nor for any communication problem that does not depend upon the University.

Evaluation

Up to 100 points, specifically:
- Qualifications, publications, and possible tests: 0 to 60.
- Interview: 0 to 40.

Selection procedure

Short-listed candidates will be invited for interview on **October 18, 2022 at 10:30 AM** via Zoom video conference.

The short-list of the candidates admitted to the interview (and any postponement) as well as the link for the interview will be published on the University's webpage by October 13, 2022 (link)

The interview will focus on the following topics:

- Methodological skills, applicable to the specific themes of the research project and analysis of the investigation perspectives in the field described by the project.
- Critical discussion on the historical-philological problems related to primary sources.
- Knowledge of the sources and the historical context.
- Assessment of knowledge of Persian and Turkish languages.

Information and contacts

Candidates may find further details about the application process and the research project in the official call published on the following (link).

For further information please email: ricerca.dsaam@unive.it.