

Call for participation
Doctoral Summer School in Athens 2025

**Religious Interactions, Juxtapositions and Imbrications
in the Mediterranean and the Balkans:
Ritualities, Materialities, Representations**

Venue: École française d'Athènes, Athens

Date: from June 30 to July 4, 2025

Working languages: English (French and Italian)

Application deadline: 28 February 2025

Partner institutions:

- École française d'Athènes, Athens
- Roma Tre University, Rome
- Culture-Borders-Gender/LAB (University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki)
- Centre Jacques Berque/CNRS, Rabat
- Institut d'ethnologie et d'anthropologie sociale (IDEAS, CNRS), Aix-en-Provence

Keywords: Mediterranean; Balkans; shared sanctuaries and religious sites; rituals; religious materiality; material/immaterial heritage; gender; visual studies; multimodal anthropology; Spatial Turn; history of religions; peace and coexistence





The École française d'Athènes (EFA), Roma Tre University, the Centre Jacques Berque and the CNRS are organising a doctoral Summer School from 30th of June to the 4th of July 2025 at the École française d'Athènes. It will bring together between 10 and 15 PhD and master students, accompanied by around ten trainers from research and higher education institutions of different nationalities. This international doctoral seminar is part of the research programme entitled “Interactions, juxtapositions and religious imbrications in Greece and the Balkans (20th-21st centuries)” supported by the École française d'Athènes (2022-2026) in the framework of its research axis “The manufacture of cultural variation”.

Since 2022, this programme has brought together specialists from several universities and research centres (Universities of Macedonia, Thessaly, Zadar, Roma, Aix-Marseille, Stanford, the Romanian Academy of Sciences, Bard College, CNRS) working on the issue of interreligious connections and interactions in the Balkans. More generally, they are part of the field of research on “shared sanctuaries” in the Mediterranean world, a field that has seen a proliferation of work since the 2000s. These studies show that religious systems are far from being closed and impervious to one another. On the contrary, on a Mediterranean scale as in the Balkans, it appears that the faithful of different religions can cross the religious boundaries more often than one might think at first sight, to go and pray in sacred spaces belonging or related to another religion (sanctuaries, tombs, places of worship, monasteries, caves, etc.), without in any way converting. These crossings are generally motivated by a quest for spiritual efficacy (grace, healing, childbirth, protection, etc.).

These types of inter-religious movements have been documented over the long term in the Mediterranean in general and the Balkans in particular. The Ottoman Empire, for example, was a fertile breeding ground for this type of interaction, which often took place on the margins of religious orthodoxy. The work of the British historian Frederick Hasluck (*Christianity and Islam Under the Sultans*, 1929) is a pioneering work in this field. These past and contemporary phenomena generate a series of ritual borrowings, acculturations, discourses and appropriations that make it possible to conceive of the religious field as particularly dynamic and characterised by porosity and fluidity.

Scientific programme

The work carried out to date has mainly consisted of monographic breakthroughs combined with comparative analyses, often on the vast scale of the Mediterranean. This SFD proposes to bring together students whose work focuses on the Balkans but also on the Mediterranean world, in order to encourage comparative reflections and discussions. One of the aims will be to ask whether there are any dynamics specific to the Balkans, compared with other areas such as the Middle East or the Maghreb, which are characterised by a form of withdrawal and retraction of the heterodox practices concerned. Activities will also include combined approaches on visual studies, museology and multimodal anthropology.

This doctoral summer school will consist of five themed days:

- Day 1: Historical perspectives. Interwoven religiosities
- Day 2: Coexistence in action: rituals, materialities, architectures, topographies
- Day 3: Reconfigurations, redeployments and questioning
- Day 4: Methodology: data collection, issues, difficulties within the fieldwork
- Day 5: Methodology: public restitutions of the research

Each day will include several complementary sequences designed to encourage exchanges and discussions between students and supervisors:

- 1 Keynote presentation by a supervising specialist
- 2-3 case studies presented by students
- 1 general discussion
- Film productions, photographic series or cartographic approaches (GIS) will punctuate the sessions.

A ½-day excursion into the capital should also be proposed.

Application form and practical details

Applications from master and doctoral students in anthropology and history will be given priority, but proposals from other disciplines will also be considered. The selection committee will pay particular attention to works that include an approach to materiality and visuality. In this respect, visual elements may be added as an appendix.

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The training seminar will take place at the École française d'Athènes (Didotou 6, Athens 106 80, Greece) from the 30th of June to the 4th of July 2025. It is open to PhD students and Master 2 students.

Accommodation in Athens (arrival on June 29 June, departure on July 5) and meals (from June 30 to July 4) will be provided by the École française d'Athènes. Travel to Athens is the responsibility of the participants, who will need to seek support from their centres, departments or doctoral schools.

The application form must be completed online on the EFA [Missions platform](#) by the end of February at the latest and will include:

- an application form
- a curriculum vitae
- a letter of motivation
- a letter of recommendation
- a short presentation of the PhD topic

Information on the Missions platform (in French only): <https://fiches-pratiques.efa.gr/books/dispositifs-etudiants/chapter/seminaires-de-formation-doctorale>

Contact:

dir.moderne@efa.gr

Scientific Committee

Dionigi Albera (IDEAS, CNRS)

Gianfranco Bria (Roma 3 University)

Maria Chiara Giorda (Roma 3 University)

Laura Jiga Iliescu (Romanian Academia of Sciences)

Manoël Pénicaud (Centre Jacques Berque, CNRS)

Gilles de Rapper (École française d'Athènes)

Fotini Tsiroidou (Culture-Borders-Gender/LAB - University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki)