

SO FAR APART, YET SO CLOSE

**Italy, the Mediterranean, and Africa
from the Fourteenth to the Twentieth Century**

International Conference

Rome, 19–21 October 2026
National Roman Museum
Colosseum Archaeological Park
VIVE – Vittoriano and Palazzo Venezia

CALL FOR PAPERS

On 19–21 October 2026, the international conference “So Far Apart, Yet So Close: Italy, the Mediterranean, and Africa from the Fourteenth to the Twentieth Century” will take place in Rome. The event is promoted and organised by the Department for the enhancement of cultural heritage - DiVa of the Italian Ministry of Culture, together with the National Roman Museum, the Colosseum Archaeological Park and VIVE – Vittoriano and Palazzo Venezia.

The conference represents the concluding stage of the project of the same name launched in 2025 and responds to one of the political priorities identified by the Minister of Culture, including research on Africa and the wider Mediterranean within the framework of the so-called Mattei Plan.

The conference invites interdisciplinary and historically grounded reflections on relations among the Italian peninsula, the Mediterranean basin, and the African continent from the late Middle Ages to the contemporary era. We welcome papers that examine connections, encounters and clashes, and reciprocal influences—including, in the broadest sense, cultural dynamics. By foregrounding contact zones, circulation, and contestation across time, the conference aims to move beyond interpretive paradigms shaped by assumptions of absolute alterity, exoticism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism.

Conceived as a forum for exchange among senior scholars and early-career researchers, the conference also seeks to offer both participants and a broader public new conceptual coordinates for thinking historically about the contemporary world.

We invite proposals presenting original research, including but not limited to the following themes:

- Material and immaterial exchanges
- Circuits, networks, and agents
- Personal dependency, enslavement, and slavery
- Imaginaries and representations
- States, colonies, and empires
- Historical practices of mobility and the musealisation of objects

Proposals must include:

- Title and abstract (Word document; max. 2,000 characters including spaces), including full name and institutional affiliation
- Brief CV (max. 1,000 characters including spaces)

Proposals must be submitted no later than 15 June 2026, 12:00 PM (CEST) to:
vi-ve.convegni@cultura.gov.it

Incomplete submissions will not be considered.

All proposals will be reviewed by the Scientific Committee.
Applicants will be notified by 10 July 2026.

Reimbursement for travel and accommodation expenses (up to a total of €650) is available to authors of accepted papers who reside outside Rome and the Province of Rome, upon submission of appropriate documentation.

PROMOTION AND ORGANISATION

Italian Ministry of Culture

Department for the Enhancement of Cultural Heritage

Alfonsina Russo, *Head of Department*

VIVE – Vittoriano and Palazzo Venezia

Edith Gabrielli, *Director General*

Colosseum Archaeological Park

Simone Quilici, *Director General*

National Roman Museum

Federica Rinaldi, *Director General*

SCIENTIFIC COORDINATION

Massimo Carlo Giannini

University of Teramo

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Valentina Fusari – University of Turin

Isabella Lazzarini – University of Turin

Anna Maria Medici – University of Urbino

Arrigo Pallotti – University of Bologna

Pierluigi Valsecchi – University of Pavia