

## **CfP: ACLA panel 2023 - Jerusalem: Fictive Realities**

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### Jerusalem: Fictive Realities

Since antiquity, Jerusalem occupies an indefinite space between fiction and reality. The holy city is imagined in the histories and literatures of the three monotheistic religions, but, almost implausibly, it also exists. In medieval Europe pilgrimage to the Holy Land was part of the religious itinerary, yielding a literary genre of travel writing. Already in this literature, one finds descriptions of the so-called Jerusalem Syndrome: faced with the real stones of the city, visitors then as in now begin to see themselves as messianic figures, adding yet another twist of reality and fantasy to the city. In later periods, pilgrimages to Jerusalem were motivated not only by religious drives, but also by a drive for self-discovery. In the European 18<sup>th</sup> century, Jerusalem is reconceived as an alluring oriental space, ostensibly untouched by the forces of European rationality — or, inversely, as Enlightenment's imagined *telos*: the holy space in which God, bearer of light and knowledge, reveals himself.

Contrary to common secularist views that associate religious beliefs and holy places with war and conflict, one can think of Jerusalem as an agent of mitigation, not agitation. As the Palestinian theologian, Mitri Raheb put it: "If god had not chosen this land, life in it would be totally unbearable; no one would be here except thieves and wolves." If the geo-political locality of Palestine is predisposed to a state of conflict, God's revelation prevents it from being a deserted battlefield. How do religious realities promote stability and cultivate prosperity? And how is a holy space formed as such?

In our seminar, we seek different iterations —literary, visual, philosophical, as well as theological— of Jerusalem as both itself in its documentary actuality, or as a metaphor for something else: spirituality, tolerance, apocalypse, violence, madness, the East, the archive. We invite papers dealing with Jerusalem as a city, an idea, a trope, imagined or real, in the works of writers, theorists, philosophers, artists, travelers, and dragomans from all languages, cultures, and historical periods. Papers attending to travel books on Jerusalem; literary or philosophical works that apply the trope of Jerusalem; fiction, poetry, or drama works that are placed in the locality Jerusalem; theological works that are occupied with Jerusalem; works that express instances of Jerusalem fever, manifest or latent. By putting these side by side, or one over the other, we will seek new ways of traversing the fictive realities of Jerusalem.

Please submit your abstract via the ACLA website no later than 31st October:

<https://www.acla.org/jerusalem-fictive-realities>

Related date:

October 1, 2022 to October 31, 2022