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Picture on the cover:

Skalne poslikave v Hekimdere pri vasi Çiçekli v okrožju İlkizdere v provinci Rize v Turčiji / Pitture rupestri a Hekimdere, vicino al villaggio di Çiçekli, nel distretto di İlkizdere della provincia di Rize in Turchia / Hekimdere Rock Depictions near the village of Çiçekli in the İlkizdere district of the Rize province in Türkiye (foto/photo: Okay Pekşen, 2022).

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Symposium Report on Violence, Justice and Reconciliation in the Mediterranean of the Three Religions: Peacemaking in the Christian, Muslim and Jewish Context (16th–19th Century), 14–15 November 2024, Rome

In recent decades, European historiography has produced numerous studies analysing the relationship between state justice, typically associated with crime repression managed by judges and tribunals, and community justice, which encompasses negotiated or restorative justice methods such as arbitration, amicable compositions, pardons and transactions. Research has shown that in early modern Western Europe, states did not merely tolerate compositional and transactional systems of conflict resolution, but actively employed them as integral components of their legal and judicial frameworks. These practices were not in opposition, contradiction or competition with each other, but rather functioned alongside each other.

However, most studies have focused primarily on European, and more specifically Western Christian, contexts. Only a few have broadened the perspective to include non-Christian European contexts, such as Jewish communities scattered across Europe, Muslim and Jewish converts or the Orthodox Balkans. Furthermore, few studies have explored non-European regions that were closely connected to Europe, including the Eastern Mediterranean, Maghreb, or the Middle East.

Between 14 and 15 November 2024, a two-day symposium titled *Violence, Justice and Reconciliation in the Mediterranean of the Three Religions: Peacemaking in the Christian, Muslim and Jewish Context (16th–19th Century)* was organised by and hosted at the Roma Tre University (Italy). The event was also held online to accommodate participants unable to attend in person.

The symposium's aim was not to conduct a systematic comparative study of judicial practices across the three religious and cultural areas – Christian, Muslim and Jewish – which would be too broad of a research topic. Rather, it focused on a more specific objective. As Paolo Broggio, the organiser of the event and representative of the Roma Tre University, emphasised in his opening remarks, titled *Religion, Justice and Normativity in the Mediterranean Space*, the goal was 'to initiate a dialogue, with each participant contributing insights from their own research background, aimed at understanding the connection between religious frameworks and the inclination toward peaceful, compositional forms of social conflict resolution.' The central issue of discussion was thus 'the question of identifying similarities and differences, as well as convergences and divergences, in approaches to interpersonal conflict resolution across Christianity, Judaism and Islam.'

The symposium was organised into four panels, with altogether 17 research specialists from across Europe and the United States.

The opening panel, *Peace in the Courts, Peace Through the Courts*, was moderated by Angelika Ergaver from the Institute IRRIS for Research, Development and Strategies of Society, Culture and Environment (Slovenia). The first paper, titled *With God on Our Side: The Impossible Peace and the Judgment of God*, was presented by Guido Dall'Olio from University of Urbino "Carlo Bo" (Italy). Dall'Olio explored the concept

of the Valley of Jehoshaphat (or Josaphat), traditionally believed to be the site of the Last Judgment. Initially a mythical location, it later came to be associated with an actual valley outside Jerusalem. Summons invoking the Valley of Jehoshaphat were not intended as a means of peaceful conflict resolution, but rather as a threat of divine justice, where the opponent would be judged before God's tribunal after death. In this context, God was regarded as an impartial judge, called upon when human justice was unable to intervene.

The next paper, *Crimes Against God vs. Crimes Against Man: The Place for Conciliation in the Perspective of Islamic Criminal Law*, was presented by Deborah Scolart from the University of Rome "Tor Vergata" (Italy). Her presentation focused on Islamic criminal law, particularly the mechanisms of conflict resolution. Scolart examined Qur'anic crimes, highlighting the distinction between *dimā* (blood crimes), where retaliation or blood money may apply depending on the circumstances, and *hadd* (pl. *hudūd*) (apostasy, fornication, theft, etc.), for which human forgiveness is not permitted as they are regarded as offences against God. As she explained, the second category of crimes, Ta'azir crimes, refers to offences where punishment is at the judge's discretion.

The first panel concluded with a presentation by Serena Di Nepi from "Sapienza" University of Rome (Italy). In her paper, *Managing Conflicts, Preserving Boundaries. Arbitration Courts in the Roman Ghetto (16th to 19th Century)*, she examined the role of arbitration as a key mechanism for conflict resolution within the Roman Jewish community. Di Nepi emphasised the well-developed system of Jewish arbitration in the sixteenth century. She provided a detailed examination of the individual stages of the arbitration process, shedding light on how the community structured its legal practices to maintain order and preserve social harmony.

The second panel of the day, *Marriage and Family Ties*, moderated by Deborah Scolart, was opened by Fernanda Alfieri from Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna (Italy). In her paper, *From a Means of Pacification to a Site of Conflict: Marriage and Gender Violence in Recent Historiography*, Alfieri first reviewed the extensive historiography on marriage as a means of resolving disputes, noting that English and German scholarship has moved beyond social and legal history. She then explored the biblical tradition of marriage, with Adam and Eve as the prototypical couple, and Aristotle's theory of marriage, both of which, alongside other influences such as the Council of Trent, shaped later conceptions of marriage and the socially ideal spousal relationships. Alfieri paid particular attention to spousal violence, emphasising that, within traditional views of marriage, limited violence was seen as necessary to maintain marital balance.

The next presentation, titled *The Dispute over the Inheritance of Samuel Abravanel: Donna Benvenida and Her Sons Between Jewish Law and Christian Courts*, was delivered by Guido Bartolucci of the Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna. Focusing on the inheritance dispute following the death of Samuel Abravanel in 1546, Bartolucci analysed the conflict between Samuel's legitimate sons, Jacob and Leone; his wife, Benvenida; and his illegitimate son, Isaac. Samuel's legitimate sons claimed inheritance under Jewish law, excluding their half-brother Isaac and Samuel's wife, despite the latter being named as the universal heir in his will. The case highlighted the complex interaction between Jewish and Christian legal systems in the resolution of inheritance disputes.

A paper by Eddy Benato from Roma Tre University concluded this panel. His study, *Courts in the Capital as Mediators of Marital Conflicts in the Periphery. Elena Cumano vs. Giovanni Battista Facen Between Secular and Ecclesiastical Courts (Feltre-Venice, 1588)* examined the marital dispute between Elena Cumano and Giovanni Battista. The socially unequal couple that married in 1587 without parental consent or witnesses faced conflict when Elena became pregnant and refused abortion. A formal marriage was proposed, but Giovanni fled, escalating the dispute. Elena prayed for her ‘husband’s’ return, eventually resorting to magic for help. Giovanni accused her of witchcraft, while her father accused him of rape. Giovanni was sentenced to five years in exile and ordered to pay alimony to Elena and their daughter, Vittoria, born in 1588, unless he married Elena. With his analysis, Benato highlighted the complex overlapping of ecclesiastical and secular courts in resolving marital conflicts.

The afternoon panel, *Justice and Religion*, moderated by Paolo Broggio, commenced with a paper by Debora Tonelli from Georgetown University (USA). In her paper, *A Retrospective Glance: The Challenge of a Common Narrative as a Way to Peacebuilding*, Tonelli examined if and how the concept of God affects and shapes our understanding of violence. She focused particularly on the interplay between violence and religion, arguing that when theology is involved in a dispute, it often assumes an ideological function, serving as a narrative that provides meaning. Tonelli proposed that achieving mutual understanding, reinterpreting history, and fostering dialogue are essential for creating a shared narrative of the past that can contribute to peacebuilding.

The panel continued with a paper by Žiga Oman (Institute IRRIS, Slovenia) and Stuart Carroll (University of York, UK), titled *Beyond Mathematics: Lutheran Peacemaking in Early Modern Germany Between Theology and Practice*. Their paper investigated the influence of Lutheran theology on peacemaking in the early modern Holy Roman Empire, with a focus on the Duchy of Württemberg. Luther’s rejection of traditional reconciliation rites, which he viewed as devoid of soteriological value, was central to their analysis. Luther emphasised that true peace with God was achieved through grace, not through outward gestures. For Lutherans, heartfelt forgiveness was essential to accessing the sacrament of communion, the key to divine reconciliation. The paper further examined the interaction between Luther’s teachings and traditional reconciliation practices, analysing how various strands of Lutheran thought understood quotidian peacemaking in relation to justification.

The final lecture of the first day, titled *Bosnian Franciscans and Challenges of Communal Violence, Justice and Reconciliation in Ottoman Bosnia*, was given by Vjeran Kursar from the University of Zagreb (Croatia). He argued that the position of the Bosnian Franciscans was more complex than their common portrayal as victims of the Ottoman regime. After the conquest, they accepted Ottoman rule voluntarily in exchange for freedom of worship and action, thereby becoming Ottoman agents. In this capacity, the Franciscans represented Catholics to the Ottoman authorities and sometimes acted as mediators. While subjected to discriminatory Islamic laws and experiencing violence during times of war and unrest, the Franciscans’ role as intermediaries was crucial for both the state and the Catholic population.

The second day of the conference began with the panel *Practices and Rituals*, moderated by Žiga Oman. The introductory paper, *The Peacemaking and Peacekeeping Practices of Early Modern Montenegrin and North-Albanian Clans*, was presented by Angelika Ergaver from the Institute IRRIS (Slovenia). She explored the religious aspects of peacemaking and peacekeeping among these clans, focusing on the role of blood feud and the rituals that ensured long-term peace. Central to these rituals was godfatherhood (*kumstvo*), which mediated conflicts and symbolised spiritual bonds between families. Other rituals included gestures of humility, symbolic oaths, and a communal meal. These practices were vital for restoring social harmony, with lasting peace often symbolised by a cross above the door of reconciled households.

Next followed the paper *Magic and Demon Control as Instruments of Peace and Conflict between Catholics and Islamic Sorcerers*, by Federico Stella from University of Naples “L’Orientale” (Italy). His presentation was divided into three parts. First, he framed magical disputes within the broader context of theological conflicts. He then discussed two case studies: the first, involving Baldassare Loyola Mandes (1631–67), who was kidnapped by the Knights of Malta in 1651, converted in 1656, and became a priest in 1663; the second, concerning Capuchin friar Justinien de Tours, who wrote *Teatro della Turchia* (1681) under the pseudonym Michele Febure. Stella concluded his presentation with some reflections and suggestions for future research.

The fourth and last panel of the symposium concluded with Darko Darovec’s paper, *Giuliano del Bello, Victim of the Vendetta in Koper (Istria) in 1541 and 1686: Two Cases of Violence and Reconciliation*. Darovec (Institute IRRIS, Slovenia) analysed two cases of blood feud from Koper (1541 and 1686), showing the shift from customary conflict resolution to state justice. In both cases, local authorities initially intervened but sought help from central authorities. The 1686 case highlighted the failure to integrate customary practices into state justice, as inquisitorial procedures prevented further retaliation. The paper concluded by emphasising the transition from self-help to state-imposed justice and the role of peacemaking rituals in this process.

The symposium ended with a final roundtable, where Gianfranco Bria from the Roma Tre University, Albane Cogné from the Ecole française de Rome (Italy), Alessandro Saggioro from the “Sapienza” University of Rome (Italy), and all the panel speakers shared their concluding thoughts.

The symposium *Violence, Justice and Reconciliation in the Mediterranean of the Three Religions: Peacemaking in the Christian, Muslim and Jewish Context (16th–19th Century)* successfully addressed the complex issue of interpersonal conflict resolution within Christianity, Judaism, and Islam from various perspectives. The speakers and moderators emphasised both the similarities and differences, as well as the convergences and divergences, in the approaches to conflict resolution across these three specific religious and cultural contexts. The organisers are to be commended for curating a series of insightful papers and for the efficient organisation of the event.

Veronika Kos