18–19
March
2027

CALL FOR PAPERS

PhD CONFERENCE

FORMS OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE DURING THE FIRST MILLENNIUM IN THE AFRO-EURASIEN SPACE

9h00 — 17h00

Université de Lille
Campus Pont-de-Bois, Villeneuve d'Ascq

Organizing committee

Raphaëlle Eban (CECILLE, ULille) — raphaelle.ebran@univ-lille.fr — **Michael David Ethington** (HARTIS, ULille) – michael.ethington@univ-lille.fr — **Dena Saffarian** (HARTIS, ULille) — dena.saffarian@univ-lille.fr — Université de Lille, Campus Pont-de-Bois, 59653 Villeneuve d'Ascq

Image p 1 : La fresque « Peinture des Ambassadeurs », paroi ouest du site archéologique d'Afrasiab, Samarcande, VII[e] siècle © Northeast Asian History Foundation, 2020 / Wikimedia Commons ; **Image p. 2** : Trois pièces d'Ezana, roi d'Axoum (c. 320–360) © Classical Numismatic Group, Inc. http://www.cngcoins.com — Conception : Ch. Aubry–HARTIS, Direction de la communication–ULille [09-2026]

CALL FOR PAPER

The First Millennium constitutes a period of intense exchanges and movements, during which people, ideas, knowledge, techniques, as well as objects, texts, and images travelled through the Afro-Eurasian space. These resulted in multiple interactions, influences, and intercultural contacts whose effects prolonged well beyond the First Millennium. Notably, these dynamics favored the spread of Christianity and Islam, of new writing systems, scientific knowledge, as well as visual models. These phenomena equally invite us to surpass the traditional frontiers between Antiquity and the Middle Ages. It is within this perspective that Garth Fowden has proposed to consider the First Millennium as a historical unity in his *Before and After Muhammad: The First Millennium Refocused* (2014).

These dynamics of circulation which characterise the First Millennium produced numerous forms of intercultural interactions with various and relevant consequences, be it the transmission of Greek words and knowledge through numerous languages and their reinterpretation, or the exchanges between Christians, Muslims, Zoroastrians, and Jews in Baghdad, or the influence of Sasanian art on other contemporary or subsequent traditions. Within this perspective, the term "dialogue" is intended in a wider form as a process of interaction which surpasses the simple, unilateral diffusion, implying instead phenomena of appropriation, negotiation, and transformation which take up multiple directions between the subjects involved.

By utilizing the notion of dialogue, we can pose larger questions on the First Millennium as a period of connections among poles belonging to a wider global space which extends along Eurasia and Africa, from Visigothic Spain to Constantinople, from Constantinople to the nomadic confederations of Central Asia, from the cities of Turkestan to the urban centres of Mesopotamia, from the Near East to Ethiopia. The complexity and diversity of studies on the First Millennium also raises the necessity for a **dialogue between disciplines**, which often remain quite isolated from one another.

This day will be first and foremost a place of exchange, discussion, and updates on current works in progress. It intends to explore the multiple modes of interaction within and between multiple cultural areas: Central Asia, the Iranian world, the Near East and the Arabian Peninsula, the Byzantine world, Ethiopia, the Mediterranean and European spaces. The languages of interest, among many, can be: Arabian, Aramaic (Babylonian, Nabatean, Palestinian, etc.), Armenian, Bactrian, Berber, Coptic, Ethiopian, Georgian, Gothic, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Old Turkic, Persian (Middle and Classical), Sabean, Slavonic, Sogdian, Syriac, or all other languages within the regions concerned with this conference.

The papers can fit within one or multiple of the following axes (non-exhaustive list):

- **Religious dialogue**: doctrinal controversies; coexistence and interreligious conflicts; heterodox movements.
- **Military dialogue**: use of rhetoric and discourse in power relations, military surrenders, and treaties.
- **Diplomatic dialogue**: embassies, protocols, and forms of political mediation.

- **Commercial dialogue**: economic exchanges, trade networks, and intercultural interactions.
- **Social dialogue**: epistolaries, daily life, and the development of social networks between different communities.
- **Linguistic dialogue**: linguistic evolution, regional dialects, and interlinguistic interactions.
- **Visual dialogue**: interactions between different visual and artistic traditions, transmission and reappropriation of visual models.

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

The envisioned speaker will have to be registered in a doctoral or master program, within the fields of History, Languages and Society, History of Art, Archaeology, Philosophy, Philology, or within any other field interested in the themes mentioned above.

Communications can be presented either in French or in English. The duration of each communication is set to 15 minutes. On-site presence is strongly encouraged, but online participation can be arranged. Communications will be divided into thematic panels, and each one will be followed by a general discussion.

The paper applications (300 words ca.), accompanied by a short biography (study level, institutional affiliation) and a general bibliography on the proposed subject comprising of 10 titles max., **is to be sent before the deadline, 30th October 2026**, at the address formesdedialogues.Ulille@gmail.com.

The participants will have access to free coffee breaks and lunches. We invite people interested in participating to take into account the financement opportunities of their universities for their mobility to Lille, in particular concerning transportation, dinners, and hotels. In any case, you will receive useful information for your stay in Lille as soon as your proposal is accepted.

For further information, you can contact the members of the organizing committee at the same email address mentioned above.

Responses to the applications will be delivered on 1th December 2026.

The program will be sent afterwards.

A certificate of participation to the conference will be given to the speakers after the event.

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

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