

Visual Imaginations of Mobility around the Mediterranean after 1800

Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf

Deadline: Feb 28, 2025

Eva-Maria Troelenberg

Between Idea and Reality: Visual Imaginations of Mobility around the Mediterranean after 1800.

The peer-reviewed academic open-access journal *Mobile Culture Studies. The Journal ›mcsj‹*, in collaboration with the Research Group MEDMACH, ERC Horizon 2021, Prof. Dr. Eva-Maria Troelenberg and Dr. Anna Sophia Messner, invites authors to submit articles for a special issue entitled “Between Idea and Reality: Visual Imaginations of Mobility around the Mediterranean after 1800”.

In this special issue, we want to look at visual sources that illustrate ideas and realities of diverse modes and processes of mobility around the Mediterranean after 1800. Mobility and acceleration became defining factors in the age of industrialization, which saw an unprecedented rise of infrastructural projects. We will explore how such projects – both imagined and realized – contribute to an understanding of the specific conditions of Mediterranean history in the globally connected modern and contemporary era. The two central key terms for all contributions to this issue are mobility and imagination. Both of these terms are ambiguous in any discourse on global history. Different modes and processes of mobility can be a precondition for productive cultural encounter, but also for forced displacement, and many other forms of movement that can have striking impacts on communities and individuals. Imagination can be understood as an enhancement of the human mind, as the ability to present and create ideas and images. Imaginations are therefore important driving forces of reality, they are instruments that open up spaces for experimentation and possibilities, they are imaginative and representational abilities that can even serve to visualize something (still) absent or not (yet) present, but could be present. In the modern era and particularly with the rise of Western concepts of aesthetics, the idea of the productive function of imagination became particularly central. Thus, it can be read as a significant moment in history, from processes of planning, designing and organizing the world to the human ability to creatively relate things to each other in time and space. In this context, the term and concepts of imagination can be used fruitfully to examine the significance of creative and aesthetic approaches to and understandings of the world as well as space and spatial orders that are central to art as well as social, political, economic and scientific practices. But imagination also has a dystopian potential. Especially when paired with different modes and processes of mobility and its underlying infrastructural grid, it is directly related for instance to environmental predicaments, forced migration and economic inequality. The question of whether the Mediterranean can be considered a unit of interpretation, united by its geographic conditions, or rather a space fragmented by nation-building and (post-)colonial conflict, can thus be explored very productively within a framework that intersects sites of mobilities and imaginations.

Images and visual sources are deeply connected to this approach: the period of industrialization was also the historical moment when visual technologies - first and foremost photography, but also other techniques of reproduction, such as film, provided the conditions for a fast and wide-ranging dissolution of images. They became mobile carriers of both realities and imaginaries across time and space. Therefore, we also seek to unite case studies from different fields such as art history, history, area, heritage or gender and queer studies which share an interest in the role of images and visual sources for imaginations of mobilities in the Mediterranean after 1800.

Against this background, this special issue takes its cue from the understanding and concept of imagination as mental images and ideas that can materialize in various visual media, such as photography and film, as well as artistic practices, which are responsible for innovation and have the potential to produce evidence. The contributions should focus on the real and the imagined space of the Mediterranean after 1800, with all its global dimensions and connections. By looking at visual sources and image archives, which reveal the manifold ways, in which the real and imagined modern and contemporary Mediterranean is visually conceptualized, constructed, and connected through diverse ideas, infrastructures, objects, or aesthetics of mobility, the contributions illuminate transnational and transregional perspectives.

Please submit your abstracts in English (no more than 300 words) and a short CV as a single PDF to medmach@hhu.de by February 28, 2025.

Notification of status by March 15, 2025.

Deadline for submission of articles by July 31, 2025.

Grounded in the humanities, Mobile Culture Studies. The Journal ›mcsj‹ is a multi-lingual, peer-reviewed, academic open-access journal without author fees, published by the Karl-Franzens-University, Graz (Austria), in the form of a yearbook. It covers the transdisciplinary field of mobility and publishes research-based contributions on the cultural and social phenomena of mobilities and their counterparts; on historical evidence of people's mobile practices; representations of mobility in oral, written, and visual culture; and on changing concepts of mobility. The editorial team consists of Dr. Maja Hultman, Dr. Susanne Korbel, Univ.-Prof. Dr Gerald Lamprecht, Univ.-Prof. Dr. Johanna Rolshoven, and Prof. Dr. Joachim Schlör who will be the editorial contact for this issue (j.schloer@soton.ac.uk).

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Reference:

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