



Italian-Chinese Dialogues 2.0

Looking Sideways: Medieval and Early Modern History in Italian and Chinese perspectives



December 2025 – July 2026
(online)

This second cycle of Italian-Chinese seminars aims to understand different perspectives on Medieval and Early Modern topics, by bringing together PhD students and young scholars to explore major themes in historical research — from power and legitimacy to networks, minorities, and cross-cultural encounters — in a comparative and truly global framework. Each of the eight sessions features paired presentations by Chinese and Italian scholars, followed by discussion moderated by senior scholars. The series aims to foster intellectual exchange, encourage joint research projects, and strengthen the cultural and academic ties between Europe and China through the study of history in its broadest and most interconnected dimensions.

Organizers

Donato Sitaro (Naples)

Jiawei Weng (Tübingen/Beijing)

Qianyu Wang (Ghent)



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI
DI NAPOLI FEDERICO II



Italian-Chinese Dialogues 2.0

Calendar

December 2025 – July 2026

Month	Topic	Chinese speaker	Italian speaker
Dec 2025	Ethnic identities	Jiaming Zheng (Beijing)	Riccardo D'Ascenzi (Tübingen)
Jan 2026	Communities and minorities I	Jiaren Liu (Jilin)	Andrea Petruccione (UNIMOL)
Feb 2026	Legitimacy and authority	Qianyu Wang (Ghent)	Stefano De Vita (UNINA)
Mar 2026	Communities and minorities II	Zijie Li (Beijing)	Martina Gargiulo (UNINA)
Apr 2026	Carolingian transitions	Jamin Zhang (Guangzhou)	Manuel Fauliri (Trento)
May 2026	Places of Power and Legitimacy	Jiawei Weng (Tübingen)	Simona Puca (UNINA)
Jun 2026	Neighbours and Borders in the Early Middle Ages	Xuke Wang (Beijing)	Donato Sitaro (UNINA)
Jul 2026	Imperial Ideology and Eschatology	Hao Wu (Beijing)	Francesco Sicilia (UNINA)

All seminars will be held online on Microsoft Teams.

To attend the seminars, please register through the form below:



Registration form:

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or scan here



Organisers

Donato Sitaro



Postdoctoral Researcher specializing in Early Medieval History at the University of Naples 'Federico II'. His work addresses how post-Roman ethnic identities were constructed, especially in the Western Atlantic peripheries. He is also interested in medieval epigraphy, patterns of long-distance connectivity, and the legacy and modern reception of the Early Middle Ages. He has published various contributions, while he is currently working on his first book on the ethnic identities of Western Britain.



Qianyu Wang (王骞禹)

PhD candidate at Ghent University, Belgium. He obtained his BA and MA from Peking University, China. His research explores the relationship between local bishops and Benedictine communities in eleventh- and early twelfth-century France. He has published several articles in Chinese and has an English article forthcoming in the *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* (2026).



Jiawei Weng (翁嘉蔚)

PhD candidate at Beijing Normal University and currently a visiting student at the University of Tübingen. Her doctoral research focuses on the feudal system and land tenure in medieval Germany, with particular attention to Duke Henry the Lion's leasing practices and the transmission of legal knowledge north of the Alps. She also explores medieval religious culture and royal authority through the study of charters and ecclesiastical records, and has presented her work at the IMC Leeds and published in peer-reviewed journals such as *World Religious Cultures* and *Review of Economic and Social History*.





December 2025



19 December

h. 10-12 (CET) / 17-19 (CST)

Ethnic Identities in Late Antique West: Power, Religion, Literature

This inaugural session of our seminar series plunges into the complex, contested landscape of identity formation, loyalty, and distinction in Late Antiquity. Moving beyond essentialist definitions, the discussion centers on two crucial case studies from the late and post-Roman West: the Visigothic Kingdom in Spain and Vandal North Africa. Different approaches and methodologies will emerge from the analysis of the varied strategies of self-definition employed by these *gentes*, the persistent influence of the Roman cultural substratum, and the decisive impact of divergent Christian affiliations on fifth- and sixth-century political and social cohesion.

Speakers

Jiaming Zheng



(Beijing Normal University)

Riccardo D'Ascenzi



(Karls Eberhard Universität Tübingen)

Chair: Donato Sitaro (UNINA)

Opening Remarks by **Prof. Roberto Delle Donne**, Coordinator of the PhD in Historical Studies at UNINA.

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January 2026



19 January

h. 10-12 (CET) / 17-19 (CST)

Communities and Minorities I: Medieval and Modern minorities in a long-durée perspective

This second session investigates strategies of governance and social cohesion within minority groups across the centuries. By comparing 11th-century Norman Italy with 18th-century German settlements in the Volga region, the discussion explores how numerical minorities negotiate power in "othered" landscapes. From the Norman "conquest of souls" through strategic hagiography to Catherine II's state-sponsored migration, these case studies illuminate the tension between force and compromise and the methodologies used to transform small groups into governing or productive majorities.

Speakers



Andrea Petruccione
(UNIMOL)



Jiaren Liu
(Jilin University)

Chair: Salvatore Liccardo (University of Vienna)

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February 2026



13th February

h. 10-12 (CET) / 17-19 (CST)

Legitimacy and Authority: The bishops in times of change

This session examines the negotiation of **legitimacy and authority** within the ecclesiastical landscapes of the early medieval West. By discussing cases from **8th-century Naples** to **11th-century Normandy**, the session explores how local powers responded to the fragmentation of central imperial and episcopal control. From the **militarized duchies of Italy** forging survival strategies through city-episcopates to the **shifting balance of power** between Norman bishops and monastic houses, these case studies illuminate the evolution of peripheral governance. The session reevaluates narratives of institutional autonomy, highlighting how mutual influence and local responses redefined the structures of authority in a transforming Roman and post-Roman world.

Speakers



Stefano De Vita
(UNINA)



Qianyu Wang
(Ghent University)

Chair: Jeffrey Berland (Tübingen)

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March 2026



28th March

h. 10-12 (CET) / 17-19 (CST)

Communities and Minorities II: Jesuits in the Far East

This session examines the negotiation of knowledge transmission and missionary identity within the global landscape of the Society of Jesus. By discussing cases from the intellectual translation of Western education in the late Ming Dynasty to the emotive construction of missionary selfhood in the 19th century, the session explores how Jesuit agents navigated the complexities of cross-cultural interactions in Asia. From the "accommodation strategy" of Giulio Aleni's *Xi Xue Fan*, which bridged European philosophy with Neo-Confucian frameworks, to the *indipetae* letters that codified the desire for China through a mythpoiesis of martyrdom, these case studies illuminate the evolution of both intellectual adaptation and institutional identity.

Speakers



Zijie Li

(Beijing Normal University)



Martina Gargiulo

(UNINA)

Chair: Wim Verbaal (Ghent)

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April 2026



29th April

h. 10-12 (CET) / 17-19 (CST)

Carolingian Transitions

This session examines the structural and social transformations of the Carolingian world, focusing on the redefinition of imperial authority and the agency of specialized social groups. By discussing the transition from the Carolingian Empire to the emerging orders of the late 9th century, the session explores how legitimacy and identity were negotiated across political and material landscapes. From Arnulf of Carinthia's "imperial kingship," which navigated the collapse of dynastic unity to forge a new transitional order, to the socio-economic networks of Italian craftsmen whose mastery of raw materials granted them a distinct status within the *regnum Italiae*, these case studies illuminate the evolution of both political ideology and social consciousness in early medieval Europe.

Speakers



Jiamin Zhang

(Jinan University)



Manuel Fauliri

(Trento University)

Chair: Edoardo Manarini (UNICAS)

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May 2026



30th May

h. 10-12 (CET) / 16-18 (CST)

Imperial Ideology and Eschatology

This session explores the representation of imperial authority through the dual lenses of political practice and ideological construction. By examining the interplay between local traditions and universalizing claims of power, the session analyses how medieval sovereignty was negotiated across institutional and symbolic landscapes. From the strategic efforts of Charles IV to integrate the Kingdom of Bohemia into the heart of the Holy Roman Empire to the broader "cultures of eschatology" that framed late-medieval monarchs as Christ-like figures linked to the collective destiny of mankind, these case studies illuminate the complex mechanisms of legitimacy.

Speakers



Hao Wu

(Beijing Normal University)



Francesco Sicilia

(UNINA)

Chair: Roberto Delle Donne (UNINA)

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June 2026



22nd June

h. 10-12 (CET) / 16-18 (CST)

Borders and Legitimacy in the Early Middle Ages

This session explores the construction of political legitimacy across the contested frontiers of early medieval Europe. By examining the complex interactions between expanding hegemonic powers and regional resistance, the session analyzes how rulership and ethnic self-perception were negotiated in transitional landscapes. From the hotly-debated political status of eighth-century Bavarian dukes under the shadow of Carolingian domination, to the strategic use of Roman, Christian, and local memories to define Welsh identity against Anglo-Saxon neighbors, these case studies will highlight the intricate dynamics of power, memory, and border-making in the Early Middle Ages.

Speakers



Xuke Wang

(Beijing Normal University)



Donato Sitaro

(UNINA)

Chair: Marco Franzoni (UNIVR)

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July 2026



25th July

h. 10-12 (CET) / 16-18 (CST)

Political and military power

This session explores the ways in which power, strategy, and social organization were interpreted in the Central Middle Ages. Focusing on Byzantine military thought and the land-granting strategies of Henry the Lion, the session examines how authority was maintained through flexibility and adaptation. From the Byzantine use of *mètis* to the monastic leasing strategies employed across Saxony and Bavaria, these papers underline the importance of decision-making in managing conflict, territory, and relationships. Together, they highlight how medieval rulers and institutions responded creatively to unstable geopolitical and social contexts, transforming diplomacy, property, and legal practice into adaptable instruments of power.

Speakers



Simona Puca
(UNINA)



Jiawei Weng
(Beijing Normal University)

Chair: Salvatore Marino (UNINA)

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