

Conference Report

2nd Conference of the Italian Association of Tibetan, Himalayan and Mongolian Studies, 7-9 July 2021

Rome, Italy

Chandra Chiara Ehm

École Pratique des Hautes Études and Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2218/himalaya.2022.7187>

Recommended Citation

Ehm, C. C. (2022). 2nd Conference of the Italian Association of Tibetan, Himalayan and Mongolian Studies, 7-9 July 2021, Rome, Italy. *HIMALAYA* 41(1): 135-136.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

The 2nd Conference of the Italian Association of Tibetan, Himalayan and Mongolian Studies (Associazione Italiana di Studi Tibetani Himalayani e Mongoli, AISTHiM) took place in Rome, Italy, on July 7-9, 2021. It was one of the first gatherings in Europe held in a hybrid format after a long period of online events due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. Usual conference preparations, such as travel planning, embarking on a train or plane, reaching an actual venue, and seeing 'real' people for an academic gathering seemed suddenly magical.

The conference was organized at the Marco Polo Complex, a colorful modern building of Sapienza Università located at the fringes of the ancient Italian capital of Rome. Hosted by Donatella Rossi, Davor Antonucci, Michela Clemente, Mara Matta, and Davide Torri, the event was made possible with the generous support of Sapienza University's Italian Institute of Oriental Studies (ISO) and Department of History, Anthropology, Religions, Arts and Entertainment (SARAS), as well as the International Association for Mediterranean and Oriental Studies (ISMEO), the Department of Asia, Africa and Mediterranean Studies at the Università di Napoli, and AISTHiM.

The dense program of the three-day conference was opened by welcoming remarks from Mario Cesari, Professor in Persian Studies at the Italian Institute of Oriental Studies, and Adriano Valerio Rossi, ISMEO president and scholar of Persian philology and literature at the Università di Napoli. The program then transitioned seamlessly to the presentation of 38 papers held either on-site or online.

The organizing committee grouped the presentations into seven thematic fields. Theory-based and text-oriented panels considering philosophical and philological aspects of Himalayan, Tibetan, and Mongolian communities were part of the panels (1) Masters and Orders, (2) Theories and Practices, and (3) Texts and Translations. More contemporary topics that highlighted topics ranging from social and religious change to gender relations to environmental issues were grouped into the panels (4) Environment, (5) Transition and Interventions, (6) Art and Architecture, and (7) Himalaya and Trans-Himalaya.

With the majority of conference participants being Italian researchers and students, the lingua franca of the conference was, in fact, Italian. Only four of the 35 presenters, namely Giacomella Orofino, Donatella Rossi, Flavio Geissshuesler, and Andrew Shimunek, held their presentations in English.

In addition to the conference's focus on Tibetan, Mongolian, and Himalayan Studies, the program also featured several extracurricular events, such as the general assembly of AISTHiM, which was followed by a convivial conference happy hour.

The 2nd AISTHiM Conference was a true success for Himalayan, Tibetan, and Mongolian studies at large and the community of Italian researchers in particular, for whom it was a precious moment to meet colleagues and friends. The opportunity to gather does not occur too often, considering that most Italian scholars are not based at research institutions in their home country.

Participants in the conference consisted of a diverse group of senior scholars, early-career researchers, and graduate students. The broad range of research areas and sources as well as the breadth of methods and theoretical approaches, reflected the vibrancy of the field of Himalayan Studies. As a young scholar relatively new to the field and community of Italian scholars, it was particularly exciting to join the ranks of such a welcoming yet rigorous group of academics.

After the formal conclusion of the conference, the conveners invited participants to contribute with chapters to the planned publication of conference proceedings. The volume will be edited by Donatella Rossi and published in Brill's Serie Orientale Roma, which combines selected papers on Asian history.