



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

The Department of Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures presents

Of Lost Cities

The Maghribī Poetic Imagination

a public lecture by

NIZAR F. HERMES



an event organized by Chiara Fontana (moderator)

discussants: Ines Peta and Sana Darghmouni

Tuesday, October 22

5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Aula Prodi - San Giovanni in Monte

2, Piazza San Giovanni in Monte

Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna

In this talk, Nizar F. Hermes will present and read from *Of Lost Cities: The Maghribī Poetic Imagination*, which textually, theoretically, and comparatively explores the poetics and politics of elegiac constructions and nostalgic representations of the premodern and early modern Maghribī city. Focusing mainly on the significance of Sicily and the Mediterranean Sea in the book, the talk will center on the eleventh-century exilic *Ifriqiyyan* (Tunisian) poets Ibn ‘Abdūn (d. 1010), Ibn Rashīq (d. 1064), Ibn Sharaf (d. 1067), and the blind al-Ḥuṣrī al-Ḍarīr (d. 1095), bringing their exilic experiences and poetic productions in Sicily and al-Andalus into comparative conversation with Ibn Ḥamdīs (d. 1133), the renowned Arabic-Sicilian poet who nostalgically and elegiacally commemorated Sicily in his *Ṣiqilliyāt* (Poems on Sicily) while living in exile in al-Andalus and especially in the Maghrib. Additionally, Hermes will read from his newly published poems, engaging in a poetic dialogue with Ibn Ḥamdīs, Arabo-Norman Sicily, and the Mediterranean as a liminal (un)poetic site, both past and present.

Nizar F. Hermes is a professor in the Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Culture at the University of Virginia. He specializes in North African, Mediterranean, and comparative literary, cultural, and historical studies. He is the author of *Of Lost Cities: The Maghribī Poetic Imagination* (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2024) and *The European Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture: Ninth-Twelfth Century AD* (Palgrave, 2012), and co-editor, with Gretchen Head, of *The City in Arabic Literature: Classical and Modern Perspectives* (Edinburgh University Press, 2018). His articles have appeared in *Scandinavian Journal of History*, *Global Food Studies*, *New Literary History*, *Journal of Arabic Literature*, *Middle Eastern Literature*, *Journal of North African Studies*, *The Comparatist*, *Journal of East-West Thought*, *Byzantina Symmeikta*, and *Nebula: Journal of Multidisciplinary Scholarship*. In addition to his academic work, Hermes is a published poet and is currently preparing his poetry collection *A Blitz on the Territories of Amnesia, or Very Exiled Thoughts* (in Arabic) for publication.

