

International conference

Oikoumene

Contacts across civilizations,
beyond the boundaries of Eurasia

25 - 27 October 2026

Villa Falconieri - Frascati



Leonid Ilyukhin, "The concordia of the sages" (Mencius, Ashoka, Pico della Mirandola, Rumi)
bozzetto for the ceiling painting of the Salone Europa, Villa Falconieri.

The link to attend the conference remotely:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_jjLlczAORMGhyudQwY2Z_w

For more information: convegni@vivariumnovum.net



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Organised by the Accademia Vivarium novum, with the institutional patronage of ISMEO and the University of Naples “L’Orientale”, the conference explores encounters between people across different historical and geographical contexts, highlighting how human interactions in frontier regions facilitated broader connections between seemingly distant worlds.

Rooted in the concept of oikoumene—the inhabited world—speakers will examine intercultural exchanges across Europe and Asia with a view to reconstructing a unified history of encounters among civilizations, which have contributed to building bridges of communication and fostered the emergence of “third” spaces and fertile grounds for cultural hybridization. In this regard, a significant example is the recurring phenomenon of the “commercial pax”, which enabled mobility and cross-border relations despite ongoing political conflicts.

By examining past models of collaboration and practices of harmonious exchange, the conference aims to offer meaningful insights for our contemporary world, increasingly plagued by wars and divisive outlooks. The desirable outcome of the various sessions is to encourage peaceful understanding and a deeper appreciation for human diversity - the ultimate expression of the infinite potential of human beings to be special in their uniqueness.



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PROGRAMME

SUNDAY OCTOBER 25

11:00 Institutional greetings

11:15 **Luigi Miraglia** (Founder and president of the Accademia Vivarium novum) -
Introduction to the conference

Session I – From the I millennium BCE to the Roman period – part I - chair:
Alessandra Coppola (University of Padua)

11:30 **Luigi Gallo** (University of Naples “L’Orientale”) - **Ptolemy’s “Geography” and East Asia**

12.00 **Yang Juping** (Nankai University, Tianjin) - **The distant Daqin: a new survey of the “Issue of Gan Ying” trip**

12:30 **Liu Baoying** (North-West University, Xi’an) - **The research on the origins of the Chinese civilisation**

Questions & discussion

17:00 Visit of Villa Falconieri and the *Poikile* school for the rebirth of the visual arts

21:00 Welcome dinner for the speakers



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MONDAY OCTOBER 26

Session II – From the I millennium BCE to the Roman period - chair:
Gianfrancesco Lusini (University of Naples “L’Orientale”)

10:00 **Ariel Samuel Lewin** (University of Basilicata) – **Roman Palmyra**

10:30 **Wolfgang Behr** (University of Zurich) - **Notes on the conceptual history of trade and exchange in Old Chinese and Indo-European**

11:00 Coffee Break

11.30 **Liu Yan** (North-Western Polytechnical University of Xi'an) - **Echoes of the Mediterranean: botanical visual vocabulary of Early China and eastern Eurasia**

12:00 **Francesca Fariello** (Accademia Vivarium novum) – **Eurasian connections. The Greek world: from the Mediterranean emporia to China**

Questions & discussion

Session III – From the Roman period to Late Antiquity – part I - chair: Umberto Roberto (University of Naples “Federico II”)

15:30 **Giancarlo Rinaldi** (University of Naples “L’Orientale”) - **Orbis sine limitibus. Interactions in the Roman Imperial age**

16:00 **Udo Hartmann** (University of Jena) - **Parthia and the long-distance between Rome, India and China**

16.30 **Michael Sommer** (University of Oldenburg) - **The world in a city: Palmyra, long-distance trade and world politics (I-III century CE)**

17.00 Tea break



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ISMEO

Session III – From the Roman period to Late Antiquity – part II - chair: Elena Santagati (University of Messina)

17:30 Bruno Genito (University of Naples “L’Orientale”) - Trade, techniques and cultural values from West to East during the middle of the 1st mill. CE. An archaeological perspective

18:00 Leonardo Gregoratti (University of Udine) - Trade through Parthia: the so-called “Arsacid blockade”, what was it? and how did it work?

18:30 Luigi Miraglia (Accademia Vivarium novum) – Humanism and Asian civilizations

19:00 Round-table discussion

19:30 Concert of the *Tyrtarion* Choir of the Accademia Vivarium novum



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ISMEO

TUESDAY OCTOBER 27

Session IV – The Roman and late antique period - chair: Dennis Mizzi
(University of Malta)

9:30 Lara Fabian (University of California, Los Angeles UCLA) - **The Caspian and its communities: critical nodes in Eurasian connectivity**

10:00 Nathanael Andrade (Binghamton University) - **Uncoined silver, the Hymn of the Pearl, and social encounters of late ancient Asia**

10:30 Ignacio Armella Chávez (Accademia Vivarium novum) - **Prisca sapientia: intersecting glances across cultures of the Mediterranean and the Near East**

11:00 Coffee break

11:30 Federico De Romanis (University of Rome “Tor Vergata”) - **Mapping Eurasia in late Antiquity**

12:00 Richard Payne (University of Chicago) - **Iran and Turan: The Western Xiongnu and the entangling of Asia in late Antiquity**

Questions & discussion



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Session V – Christianity within the ‘oikoumene’ – chair: Giancarlo Rinaldi
(University of Naples “L’Orientale”)

15:00 Maurizio Paolillo (University of Naples “L’Orientale”) - **King George of the Onggud: geopolitics and religion between the Mediterranean and China in the age of Marco Polo**

15:30 Gianni Criveller (Milan PIME Cultural Centre; The Sacred Heart Catholic University, Milan) - **The encounter of two great civilizations: the Confucian culture and Christian Humanism. Matteo Ricci, the Jesuits missionaries in Late Ming China: the way of friendship, accommodation and scientific dialogue**

16:00 Andrea Balbo (University of Turin) - **The role of the Greek and Latin classics at the intersection of the European and Chinese worlds in the 16th and 17th centuries: M. Ricci, M. Boym and the Confucius Sinarum Philosophus**

16:30 Tea-break

17:00 Final round-table discussion

18:00 Book presentation in the presence of the author: Paolo Santangelo, *Facets of the self in Early Modern China. Escape from authoritarian and moralistic predicaments*. Discussant: Maurizio Paolillo (University of Naples “L’Orientale”)