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ROMA

TWELFTH-CENTURY ROME: MIRROR OF THE
MEDITERRANEAN RELIGIONS

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Drew University

The twelfth century is famous as an era of Crusading and persecution, but conflict was only part of the narrative of the Mediterranean. Intellectual and commercial exchange and artistic and religious cross fertilization were essential aspects of the twelfth-century Mediterranean. The twelfth century was also a period of “renaissance,” of increased interest in ancient Rome, both in history and legend.

This conference considers the city of Rome as the object of multi-religious and multicultural interest and idealization. Rome is one of the few cities, along with Jerusalem, for which we have Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, and Latin descriptions all composed in the twelfth century. These texts, images and inscriptions reconstruct the city both as a physical and imagined reality. These challenge the notion of Western identity by revealing Rome as an important part of the identity of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian cultures.

Participants:

Emily Albu, University of California at Davis.

Mario Casari, Università di Roma, "La Sapienza."

Giles Constable, Institute for Advanced Studies, Princeton University.

Louis I. Hamilton, Drew University.

Herbert Kessler, Johns Hopkins University.

Stefano Riccioni, Non-residential Postdoctoral Fellow of the John Paul Getty Foundation, Los Angeles, California.

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Organized by: Louis I. Hamilton and Stefano Riccioni.