NAAIMS 5th Bi-Annual Lecture:

Topic:	**Islamic and Arabic Heritage in Sicily:**
Date:	**November 10, 2026**
	12:30 – 1:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time
Cosponsor:	**Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI**
Lecturer:	**Professor Maria Carola Leone**

ABSTRACT

"Islamic and Arabic Heritage in Sicily:
Language, Culture and Mediterranean Identity"

Prof. Maria Carola Leone, Associazone Zaleuco, Italy

Sicily served as a pivotal laboratory for medieval Islamic-Christian interactions. This study examines the enduring impact of Arabic administration and culture on the island's linguistic heritage, material culture, and contemporary identity. Using a decolonial philological framework, it investigates the integration of Arabic terminology and toponyms into the Sicilian idiom. Ultimately, the paper demonstrates how Sicily's Islamic heritage provides a vital framework for modern intercultural dialogue and progressive education. The history of Sicily cannot be fully understood without considering the profound influence of Islamic and Arabic civilization on the island's cultural and linguistic identity. Between the ninth and eleventh centuries, Arab-Muslim rule transformed Sicily into an important Mediterranean center, leaving a lasting legacy in agriculture, architecture, language, intellectual life, and cultural traditions.

LECTURER:

Prof. Maria Carola Leone is a language teacher with the Italian Ministry of Education and Merit (MIM) and a researcher specializing in the medieval intellectual history of the Mediterranean basin. She holds an honors Master's Degree in Modern Languages and Literatures (LM-37), focusing on Islamic-Christian relations and Arabic philology. She collaborates with the University of Messina on Arabic-Ottoman influences and is an active member of the Associazione Culturale Zaleuco, regularly presenting at international conferences.