

TELLING TIMES: MEMORIES OF CULTURE, CULTURES OF MEMORY

Lecture Series 2018



Thursday, 7 June 2018, 15:00-16:30

MAURA HAMETZ (Old Dominion University)**“Everyone (secretly) loves Sisi/Sissi:
The Charismatic Empress in Italy and beyond”**

The Habsburg Empress Elisabeth, the consort of Franz Joseph, was renowned for her beauty, elegance, spirit, and her eccentricities. Venerated in life, the empress was martyred and mythologized in death. Maura Hametz, co-editor of the forthcoming collection *Sissi's World* (Bloomsbury 2018), will explore the myth and memory of Sissi. Taking the memory of Elisabeth evoked by the statue of Elisabetta in Trieste as a starting point, she will discuss Sissi in the context of memory in Italy and then in the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary work of scholars included in the collection to seek to illuminate the ways in which the enigmatic Sissi/Sisi is remembered as a personage and mythologized as a romantic figure in lands throughout the former Habsburg empire and beyond, as far from Europe as the United States and China. She will explore Sissi's fame as extolled in monuments, museums, and sculpture and her celebrity as represented in film, literature, and art. What is the secret of the empress's enduring fame? And, how might a conceptualization of charisma help to explain the complex and multi-faceted modern Sissi phenomenon?

Maura Hametz is a Professor of History at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, USA, specializing in the history of Italy and the late Habsburg empire since the late nineteenth century. Her research explores the intersections of politics, culture, memory, law, religion, gender, and ethnic and national identity. She is the author of *In the Name of Italy* (Fordham U. Press, 2012) and *Making Trieste Italian, 1918-1954* (Boydell and Brewer [Royal Historical Association new series], 2005) and co-editor of *Jewish Intellectual Women in Central Europe, 1860-2000* (Mellen, 2012), and *Sissi's World: The Empress Elisabeth in Myth and Memory* (Bloomsbury Press, 2018 [forthcoming July]). In addition to further work on monuments, memory and Sissi in Trieste, she is currently working on projects that explore the contours of citizenship in the northern Adriatic post-Habsburg states, Virginian (American) World War I veterans ideas on war and faith, and notions of violence, intimidation, and justice in Fascist Italy articulated in the context of the Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State.

**Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity**Hermann-Föge-Weg 11
37073 Göttingenwww.mmg.mpg.de**Contact:****Marina Cziesielsky**Tel: +49 (551) 4956 - 201
cziesielsky@mmg.mpg.de