

Melville and the Mediterranean

Jerusalem / 17-21 June 2009

Sponsored by The Melville Society

With participation by ASTENE (Association for the Study of Travel in Egypt and the Near East)
and support from the English and literature departments of MIT, Stanford, and Yale

CALL FOR PAPERS

This conference is devoted to understanding the place of the Mediterranean and the “Holy Land” in Western consciousness. Using Melville’s epic *Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land* as one focus, the conference is meant to open up discussions related to travel, literature, other humanities and the sciences, aesthetics, anthropology, archaeology, ethnography, and religion. Papers and panels are welcome on a range of international writing about the region, including but not limited to the following:

- *Clarel* as a major work of travel in the 19th century and today; its qualities and challenges; relation to political, historical, religious, mythological, scientific, ethnographic, and philosophical views; iconography and aesthetics; resurgence and necessity in the canon
- Meaning of the Eastern Mediterranean (Levant) region, its position as a basin of culture, civilization, and mythology; the significance of its landscape and life to larger existential issues, in works by Melville and various writers, in different periods
- Interest, comparatively, in other parts of the Mediterranean region
- Connections between Melville and other writers and artists (e.g., Goethe, Humboldt, Piranesi, Kinglake, Poe, Hawthorne, Twain); connections to contemporaneous and later American, British, French, German, Italian, Persian, or other Eastern influences, and philosophies
- Works encouraging study and translation of Melville in the region; alternative research and outlooks; translation and international context of Melville’s works; Melville’s poetry and poetics
- 1876: U.S. Centennial, publication of *Clarel*, and other publications and events in that year
- Theorizing on topics such as travel writing, Orientalism, postcolonial theory, race and ethnicity, applied to Melville or others

The conference organizers welcome various perspectives and session formats. Appropriately, the activities of this world conference will be centered in international venues in the Old City of Jerusalem and its vicinity, and will offer opportunities for touring the region.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

THOMAS L. THOMPSON, University of Copenhagen;
author of *The Mythic Past (The Bible in History: How Writers Create a Past)*

AMY KAPLAN, Professor of English, University of Pennsylvania; author of *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture*

Send one-to-two page proposals for papers, roundtable discussions, and panels by **1 September, 2008** to the email addresses of the conference co-chairs:

BASEM RA’AD basem48@yahoo.com

TIM MARR marr@email.unc.edu and

HILTON OBENZINGER obenzinger@stanford.edu

Melville’s copy of *The Monastery of Santa Saba* by T. Allom, courtesy Berkshire Athenaeum

