

The New York Open Center Presents  
AN ESOTERIC QUEST FOR

# Ancient Arabic and Medieval Sicily

On the Isle of Ortigia, Siracusa, Sicily  
June 13 to 18, 2013

Post Conference Journeys

**Journey Through Sicily**  
June 18 - 23 (or 25)

**The Islands of Malta and Gozo**  
June 18 - 23

Co Sponsored by the Lumen Foundation and the Divination Foundation  
[www.EsotericQuest.org](http://www.EsotericQuest.org)

# Join us on a quest

*as we follow the golden thread of wisdom,  
the half-forgotten spiritual history of the West,  
in our tenth international conference on the  
Western Esoteric Tradition.*

Sicily is one of the most culturally intriguing and historically rich places in the world. Located at the center of the Mediterranean, mid-way between its Western and Eastern shores, at the point where Europe almost meets Africa, it has been swept by multiple waves of civilization and developed its own distinct and passionate culture. Known to the Ancient Greeks as Persephone's Island, it was a vital part of Magna Graecia, where the philosophers Empedocles and Plato sought to implement wisdom in the aftermath of Pythagoras' School beyond the straits in nearby Crotona.

In the 10th and 11th century, Sicily became a brilliant center of Arabic culture as Palermo rose to become the jewel of the Islamic world with its poets, geographers and mosques. In the 12th century the incoming Norman impulse created the most tolerant, multicultural and radiant land of its time, a place where Catholics, Byzantines, Jews, and Muslims all co-existed and flourished. It was an island where esoteric knowledge flowed through philosophers, Sufis, Neo-Platonic troubadours, Kabbalists and alchemists, and seekers of The Grail.

Join scholars, artists, writers and historians as we explore these dimensions of Sicily. From the pre-Socratic philosophers through the Muslim poets to the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, 'Stupor Mundi,' this island's cultural history is profound, powerful and unexpected. The latest in a highly regarded series of Quests produced in Europe and North Africa, this conference will take place on the beautiful small island of Ortigia, in Siracusa, a place filled with evocative traces of ancient, Islamic and medieval history.

## **Pre-Conference Webinars with Leonard George, Ph.D.**

**Into the Volcano: *The Forgotten World of Magna Graecia***

Saturday, February 9th, 1-3pm EST

**Voices from the Cave: *Oracles, Shrines and Mysteries of Magna Graecia***

Sunday, February 24th, 1-3pm EST

**To register:** <http://www.opencenter.org/webinars/>

The New York Open Center is the city's leading venue for holistic learning and world culture.  
[www.opencenter.org](http://www.opencenter.org)

## **Contact:**



For more information, please contact Andrea Lomanto at 212.219.2527, ext. 101, or write [quest@opencenter.org](mailto:quest@opencenter.org). Please see our website at [www.esotericquest.org](http://www.esotericquest.org) for additional conference details and program updates.

The New York Open Center would like to thank the Divination Foundation for their support.

**Pythagoras through the Ages**  
**Joscelyn Godwin, Ph.D.**

Pythagoras stands like a prophetic oak at the dawn of the Western Esoteric Tradition, dropping acorns from which saplings have sprouted ever since. Every age has had its own image of him, and made its own use of his discoveries, doctrines, and legends. If a single theme runs through all of them, it is the reconciliation of spirituality and science.



Pythagoras from Raphael's *School of Athens*

**Into the Volcano:**  
***The Teachings of Empedocles***  
**Leonard George, Ph.D.**

Empedocles of Akragas was a shamanic figure, renowned for prophecies and healings. He promised his students the power to rescue departed souls. Empedocles taught that we are spirits, endlessly reborn, caught in a vortex of Earth, Water, Air and Fire. This doctrine permeates later esoteric thought. It was said that Empedocles leapt into Mt. Etna so that he would be remembered as a god, not a man. But the tale may symbolize secret rites of Hekate.



Statue of Empedocles in Agrigento



Ercole Temple in Agrigento

**Sicily: The Land Speaks Its Stories**  
**Douglas Kenning, Ph.D.**

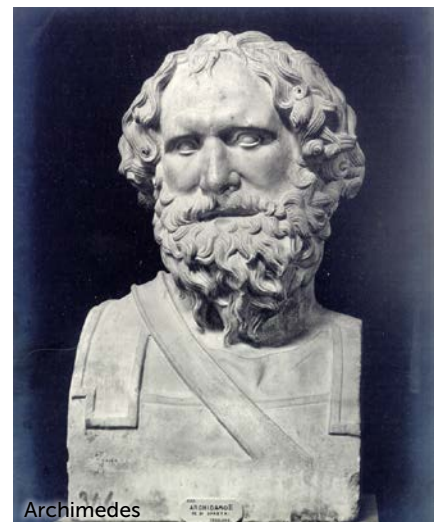
Classical allegory and myth describe our lives: its archetypes inhabit our dreams and our art museums. Visitors to Sicily are fortunate to experience myth where it was born and has lived for millennia: they can know it through the stony, dry, tangible Mediterranean realities of place. Sicels, Elymians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, all felt the land and sea to be alive with story, and through myth they maintained a sacred relationships to them. How do we listen to these ancient sites?

**The World Soul:**  
***From Pythagorean Italy to the Gaia Hypothesis***  
**David Fideler, Ph.D.**

This illustrated presentation explores the ancient idea of living nature, how it went into eclipse, and how it is now re-emerging through new scientific discoveries. For most Greek philosophers, the universe was seen as a holistic, living, and intelligent structure, a vision that persisted in different ways from the ancient world through the Renaissance, and helped to maintain a harmonious relationship between human beings and the world in which we live. With the Scientific Revolution, nature came to be pictured as a dead, inanimate machine. This worldview helped humans gain power over nature, but it also led to a crisis in which human beings became spectators in a world now devoid of life, intelligence, and creativity. Over the last century, every underlying premise of the mechanistic worldview has been proven to be false (This presentation will be given in recorded form).

**Archimedes and the 13 Semi-Regular Solids**  
**Scott Olsen, Ph.D.**

The great Archimedes of Siracusa, Sicily, is recorded by Pappus in his *Collectio* of mathematical works as having discovered the thirteen Semi-Regular Solids. Eleven of them are formed by truncations (cutting) of the vertices of the famous five Regular Platonic Solids. The mathematical ratios present in the thirteen Archimedean and five Platonic solids are the scaffolding upon which Nature and the Cosmos itself are built. For example, the truncated icosahedron (or soccer ball) has led to important discoveries in quasi-crystals and the treatment of the HIV virus. By examining the underlying resonances of these famous solids, rooted in the Golden Ratio or Divine Proportion, we can put ourselves in resonance with the inner working of Nature herself.



Archimedes



**Muslim Sicily**  
**Leonard Chiarelli, Ph.D.**

The years of Arab rule had a far-reaching impact upon the island's ethnic and social character. The peoples who came to Sicily in the 10th and 11th centuries reflected the inhabitants that comprised the Muslim world from Spain to Persia. Where did the Arab and Berber tribes that settled on the island establish themselves? What kind of religious, literary and scientific culture did they create? How did Muslim rule impact Italy during the Middle Ages? This talk will report on this inheritance, the areas where it has remained in the consciousness of Sicilians, and how it has affected modern Sicilian literature from Pirandello to Camilleri.

**Sufism in Italy during the Medieval period**

**Alessandra Marchi, Ph.D.**

The Arab/Muslim conquest of Sicily and the south of Italy began as early as the 7th century, and the Islamic presence continued for centuries, giving Sicily the appearance of a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural state. The question of how Sufism in particular penetrated Sicilian culture and habits is difficult to answer precisely. This talk is an investigation of how Sufism was known in the Middle Ages, and how it passed through Sicilian and Italian culture in mystical traditions, literature and poetry.

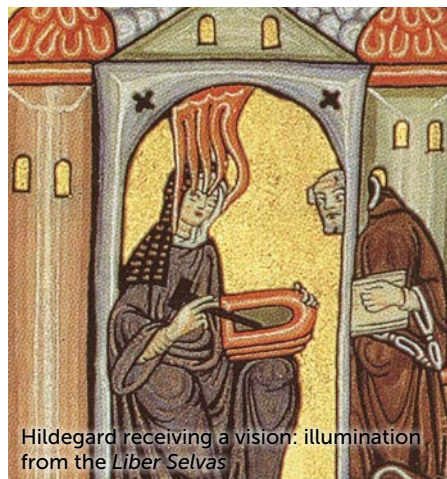
**East meets West**  
**The Intriguing Court of Roger II of Sicily**  
**Karen Ralls, Ph.D.**

Medieval Sicily was a land of three or more civilizations, Greek, Arab and Latin, often held under a single ruler. The Norman Roger II (1095 - 1154) was the first King of the Two Sicilies. He regularly entertained at court the renowned Arab geographer al-Idrisi and the Greek historian Nilus Doxopatrius, creating one of the most stimulating courts of the 12th century, one that was unusually tolerant in religious and intellectual matters. Intellectual life in Sicily was greatly rejuvenated with new Islamic impulses under his rule. Were there also connections with the Knights Templar, the early Knights Hospitaller, and other 12th century knightly and esoteric influences? Roger united all Norman conquests in Italy into one kingdom, thus leaving a fascinating legacy.

**Supernal Secrets and the Greenness of the World: The Visionary Life of Hildegard of Bingen**

**An Illustrated Talk by Clare Goodrick-Clarke, M.A.**

The 12th century saw an efflorescence of mysticism among women, and Hildegard of Bingen, known as the 'Sibyl of the Rhine', was perhaps the most extraordinary amongst them. Her beautiful pictures, sublime musical compositions, and her medical practice all drew upon her mystical visions which combine the Christian ideal of love, and the Platonic world described in the Timaeus. Her visions of Power, Wisdom and Love as instruments of creation convey an ideal that came to be reflected everywhere in the art and architecture, literature, mathematics, and music of the period, and went on to influence both Trithemius and Paracelsus. Her work was intended to stimulate the inner imagination of the fiery soul and so lead the individual deeper into the heart of the spiritual mysteries and the great universal love from which they spring.



Hildegard receiving a vision: illumination from the *Liber Selvas*

**Food and Festivities**  
**Sicily's Classical Heritage**  
**Mary Taylor Simeti**

Sicily was sacred to Persephone, and the seasonal rhythms of agriculture which her myth represents still exert a strong influence upon daily life on the island. Cold, wet winters alternate with long months of heat and drought according to a palimpsest of calendars – agrarian, classical and liturgical. Propitiation, harvest and thanksgiving follow one upon another, fundamental moments in the Sicilian year. The rites and ritual feasts concerning food and food production, so deeply essential to sustaining life itself, are conservative and often impervious to change, and thus it is here that the influence of Sicily's classical past lingers most visibly.

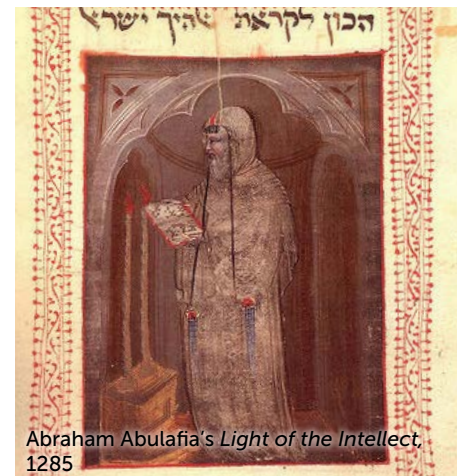
**"The Wonder of the World": Frederick II of Hohenstaufen and his Sicilian Court**  
**Christopher McIntosh, D.Phil.**

We will go back in time to the amazing court of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen (1194-1250), known as "stupor mundi" (wonder of the world), one of the most dazzling and remarkable monarchs in European history, who spoke six languages and was equally brilliant as a scholar, falconer, poet, ruler and military commander. He ruled mainly from his Sicilian kingdom, which he made into a thriving center of art, science and learning, embracing Islamic, Jewish and Christian culture. Like Rudolf II in Prague four centuries later he brought to his court at Palermo a galaxy of artists, architects, musicians, poets, mathematicians, astronomers, alchemists and occultists. Among the latter was the legendary Scottish magus Michael Scot. Frederick played into the millenarian prophecies of the age, acting out the role of the sacred monarch who would usher in a new era. As part of this role he crowned himself King of Jerusalem and commissioned his troubadours to sing of the Holy Grail.

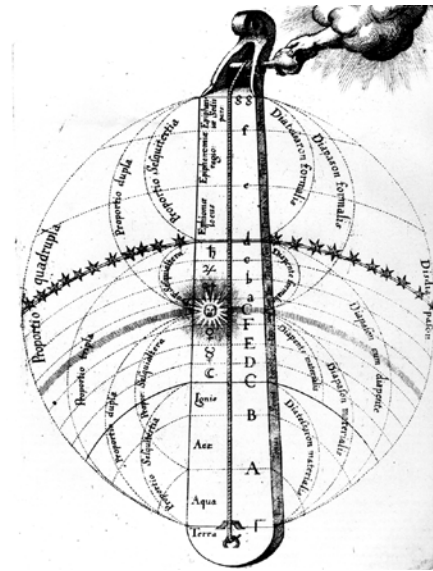
**Prophetic Kabbalah and a 13th Century Rabbi's Mission to the Pope:**

**In the Footsteps of Rabbi Abraham Abulafia**  
**Paul Fenton, Ph.D.**

This lecture is a biographical account of the strange saga of Rabbi Abraham Abulafia, one of the most fascinating figures in the history of Kabbalah. His search for the legendary Sambatyon River brought him from Saragossa in Spain to Messina in Sicily, where, impelled by an "inner voice", he wrote a number of mystical essays before proceeding to Rome in 1280 to confront Pope Nicholas III. Imprisoned and condemned to death, he miraculously escaped the stake and fled to Sicily, where he announced the onset of the Messianic era.



Abraham Abulafia's *Light of the Intellect*, 1285



## Pythagorean Music Theory in Practice

Joscelyn Godwin, Ph.D.

We will work with a monochord to understand the basic insight that Pythagoras brought to the West: that musical harmony is simple numbers made audible. We will learn how Plato applied this doctrine to cosmology, and how it generates the scales and modes of all music. No musical knowledge required, only the ability to count to 10.

## From Cave to Cathedral: The Legacy of Greek Oracles in Magna Graecia and Beyond

Leonard George, Ph.D. and Marjorie Roth, Ph.D., DMA

When the first Greek settlers in Sicily came ashore, they raised an altar to Apollo. It was his oracle-priestess, the Delphic Sibyl, who guided them there. Colonists set up their own oracles at sites throughout Magna Graecia, including Siracusa and Akragas. The most famous was a Sibyl's cave near Cumae. Her recorded utterances guided Rome throughout its history. Sibyls entered Christian mythology with fabricated prophecies of Christ's coming, and lived on in folklore, art and music.



Temple ruins in Selinunte

## Horses of the Heart's Desire: The Teachings of Parmenides

Leonard George, Ph.D.

The Greek colony of Elea on Italy's Tyrrhenian shore was home to one of history's most profound sages. Parmenides shared his teachings in a poem, of which only fragments survive. In it, he recounts his voyage to the underworld in a horse-drawn chariot. There he meets a goddess who reveals "the round, calm heart of Truth", as well as a "god's-eye view" of human consciousness. These insights formed the basis of the Western metaphysical tradition.



Parmenides from Raphael's School of Athens

## Sicily and the Magical Family of Geometric Forms

Steve Bass, M.A.

At one time Sicily and southern Italy were the wild west frontier of the Greek world. The early Pythagoreans made this region their home. Later Italy and Sicily were visited by Plato in the hope of creating a philosopher king. Though Plato's hopes were not realized, Pythagoreanism stuck, and in a later generation the great mathematician Archimedes of Siracusa built on their work. While Plato had suggested a cosmology of the five regular solids, Archimedes defined the thirteen Semi-Regular Solids, all born of the original five. We will review this early history and recall the esoteric background of this magical extended family of primary geometrical forms.



Antique painting in a cloisters of a neapolitan church representing the tarantella

## The Tarantella: Music, Magic and Medicine in Magna Graecia (and Today)

Marjorie Roth, Ph.D., DMA

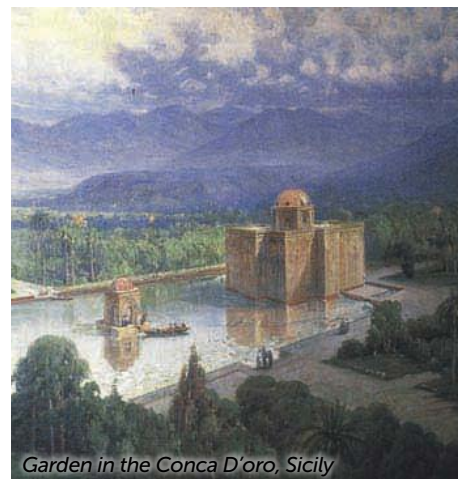
The Tarantella in modern culture is both ubiquitous and misunderstood. A staple at Italian weddings and an inescapable set piece of Italian tourism, the 'spider' dance' actually has a long and venerable history as medicine of a most powerful and effective kind. The origin, musical features, and practical uses of this dance can tell us much about the power of harmony to balance the human body, mind and soul, in the past and in our own time.

## Gardens as Places of Esoteric Quest:

Foretastes of Paradise

Christopher McIntosh, D.Phil.

This workshop is a tour of sacred and symbolic gardens, past and present. It includes an exploration of the Islamic notion of the garden as a foretaste of paradise, which was brought to Sicily in the 9th century by the Arabs along with the citrus fruits and many exotic flowers still seen in Sicily today. The Islamic style of the garden was taken over by the Normans, who conquered Sicily in the late 11th century. Today, very few traces of those gardens remain, but we can visit them in our imaginations as one aspect of the rich cultural mixture that characterized Sicily in the Middle Ages. We shall also examine other examples of sacred gardening up to the present day and expand our view of what a garden can be.



Garden in the Conca D'oro, Sicily

## The Enigma of Frederick II Malcolm Kennard, Ph.D.

Although a Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick II was born into a unique cultural mix provided by his Norman mother, Constance of Sicily, and his German father, Henry VI. Sent to Palermo to be educated in the Sicilian way, he was considered brilliant but unusual. Strongly influenced by Islamic, Hebrew and Christian scholars, all of whom he cultivated in his court, he was fluent in multiple languages including Arabic, read the Koran, and built 200 castles in southern Italy. He was also a student of mathematics, philosophy, natural history, medicine and architecture. This session will explore the enigmatic nature of Frederick, the contradictions in his personality, and try to unravel the myth from the man.



Frederick II meets Al-Kamil

## Sicilitudine The Uniqueness of Sicily John Keahey

This workshop includes a discussion of *sicilitudine*, or that aspect of Sicilian culture and life that sets Sicilians apart from Italians (most Sicilians say their island is "north of Africa" not south of Italy). We will examine the clues of Sicilian uniqueness found in the writings of Giuseppe Tomasi Lampedusa, who gave us the Sicilian classic *The Leopard*; Leonardo Sciascia, perhaps Italy's finest writer of the mid-to-late 20th century; mystery writer Andrea Camilleri, who still is crafting tales set in Sicily and is Italy's best-selling author; plus earlier writers Giovanni Verga and Giuseppe Pirandello.



Taormina Symbol of Sicily



The Pantocrator mosaic in the Cathedral of Monreale, Palermo

## Norman Sicily and the Arthurian Dream Paul Bembridge, M.Phil., RSA

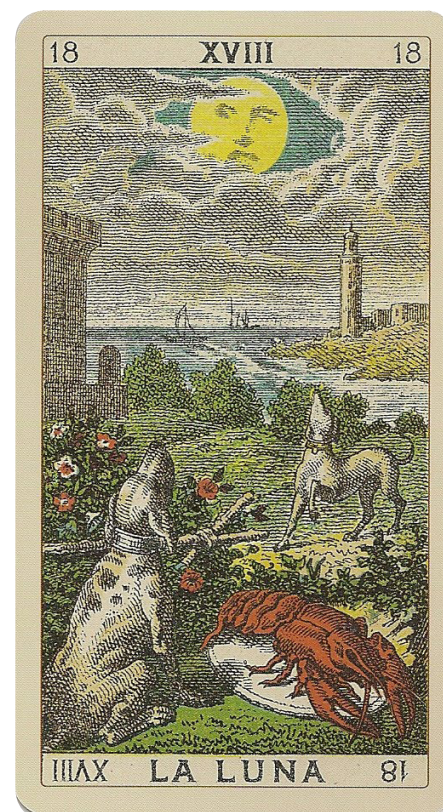
The Norman conquest of southern Italy and Sicily in the late 11th century might be considered to have brought an esoteric mission of the Normans towards a climax of expectation, involving the capture of Jerusalem and the restoration of Paradise. As patrons of Arthurian literature, the Norman aristocracy encouraged the vision of the perfect knight as a means to this restoration, not least through the quest for the Grail. This workshop enables us to enter the visionary world of the 12th century Normans through their art and literature, including the mosaics of Palermo and Otranto.

## Colors and the Kabbalistic Way Paul Fenton, Ph.D.

This workshop will examine how two 13th century Eastern mystical schools, one of Jewish Kabbalists and the other of Muslim Sufis, employed colors in their mystical prayers and meditations in order to gauge their spiritual levels. Using a sort of Kabbalistic mandala, they would visualize colored letters to indicate specific sefirot or states of the soul. So close are these contemplative methods in the mystical traditions of Judaism and Islam that it is tempting to suppose they have a common ancient origin.

## Tarot and Kabbalah Ellen Goldberg, M.A.

Both Tarot and Kabbalah explain the nature of the Divine and, by reflection, the nature of the human being. The oldest book of the Kabbalah, The Sepher Yetzirah, begins by saying that the Dweller in the Heights, whose habitation is Eternity, created the Universe in thirty-two mysterious paths of wisdom, by means of three Sepharim: namely Numbers, Letters and Sounds. We will consider the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the 10 Sephiroth of the Tree of Life. This presentation will include lecture, inner journey and learning a simple, yet profound, way to use the Tarot for self-reflection.



## AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES



### A Walking Tour of Ortigia

Ortigia is the ancient heart of Siracusa, an intensely beautiful island with three thousand years of history, that is one of the most resonant places on earth. It possesses the oldest Greek temple known outside of Greece, plus many narrow canyon streets of Spanish baroque buildings, Norman churches, and a Byzantine Jewish ritual bath. We find echoes of the island's favorite son, Archimedes, and of the ancient Greek nymph Arethusa, who spoke with Demeter as the goddess passed through Ortigia in search of her daughter Persephone.



### An Afternoon Boat Ride through the Plemmirio

The Plemmirio is a pristine, protected, marine area surrounding Ortigia, a natural paradise of underwater caves and coral, a rich biodiversity of sea life, and a rocky coast filled with palm groves, agave, prickly pear cactus, and myrtle, lizards and migratory birds. We'll spend our afternoon break on a boat ride in the Bay, delighting in the Sicilian landscape and seascape, under the glorious Mediterranean sun.

## EVENING ACTIVITIES



### Opera dei Pupi

#### *La Compagnia dei Pupari Vaccaro-Mauceri*

Sicilian "Pupi" (marionettes) are a tradition that dates from the early 19th century and that has earned UNESCO World Heritage status. This form of puppetry animates the tales of a traveling story-teller, and draws on the once wildly popular medieval-renaissance chivalric romances about the adventures of the knights of Charlemagne in battle with the Saracens, as well as stories of bandits, Garibaldi and the Italian union, and myths and tragedies of Siracusa. The Vaccaro-Mauceri Company is widely considered among the mostly skilled and sensitive of Sicilian puppeteers.



### Antigone by Sophocles

#### *The Greek Theatre Festival*

The Greek Theater Festival in Siracusa is one of the cultural highlights of the Italian year. Performed in the city's evocative amphitheater, each play features well-known Italian actors and directors. This evening we will experience the tragedy of *Antigone*, the daughter of the accidentally incestuous marriage between Oedipus and Jocasta.



### An Evening of Arabic and World Music for Interspiritual Peace

#### *Ramzi Harrabi and Ensemble*

This evening performance will evoke the poignant legacy of Ibn Hamdi, Siracusa's great Arabic poet, and convey a message of tolerance and mutual understanding among the world's cultures and religions. The performance will feature local artists from Siracusa and Ramzi Harrabi, an award-winning Tunisian poet, singer and painter who uses his art to connect religions and cultures.

# PRE CONFERENCE TOUR

## The Ascent of Etna

June 12, 2013

With Douglas Kenning, Ph.D.

Etna is one of the world's most storied mountains and mythic places. It is also Europe's most active volcano and Sicily's beloved grandfather. This day trip will offer to those who arrive early a chance to experience this legendary site. We begin from Catania by ascending two-thirds of the south slopes of Etna to the Rifugio Sapienza area, listening to tales of the birth of the mountain said to begin with Gaia and include Uranus, Kronos, Zeus, and a cast of other divinities. We then take a cable-car up another 4000 feet to observe the smoking vents in the company of an alpine guide. Afterwards, we descend the eastern slopes of Etna to enjoy a small boutique winery with lunch al fresco and views over the Mediterranean.

**Cost in a basic Ortigia hotel:** \$470 per person in double accommodations; \$600 in single accommodations

**Cost in an upgraded Ortigia hotel:** \$500 per person in double accommodations; \$625 in single accommodations

**Includes guided tour of Mt. Etna, all entrance fees, one night's accommodation in Catania on the 11th and in Ortigia on the 12th of June, all meals beginning with dinner on the 11th through breakfast on the 13th, and air-conditioned coach transport to Mt. Etna and into Ortigia on the 12th**

**Please Note:** All Etna activities are physically easy, for anyone with a normal ability to walk on a loose gravelly surface and climb a few flights of stairs.

# POST CONFERENCE JOURNEYS

## Journey through Sicily

June 18 - 23 or June 18 - 25, 2013

With Douglas Kenning, Ph.D.

After a week in Siracusa where the first golden age of Sicily flowered, we embark on a journey to Sicily's places of deepest resonance, traveling around the island in a clockwise manner. We depart for the high plateau town of Enna, older than any Greek city, from where we will gaze across Sicily, as did Demeter, seeking sign of her daughter Persephone. We continue to the Roman Villa del Casale at Piazza Armerina with the greatest mosaic floors of the ancient world. We then travel further out across rolling countryside to Agrigento, whose temples surpass those in Greece itself. Heading west along the remote south coast brings us to the ruins of the Greek city of Selinunte on its evocative windswept site, and then to Motzia, among the salt flats and romantic windmills of far western Sicily, where we visit this Carthaginian city and its oddly exotic evidences of Canaanite religion. We continue to Erice and tour the ancient mountaintop town founded by Aphrodite, ruled by Hercules, where a cult of sex, from Astarte to Venus, once flourished.

We then turn north to visit the incomparably beautiful temple in Segesta, which Virgil tells us was founded by Aeneas. We take a walking tour of the incredible sites of old Palermo, including gems like the Palatine Chapel. After eating in a place famous both for its Slow Food quality and its anti-Mafia stance, we travel up to Monreale to visit one of the greatest of cathedrals with acres of stories in gold leaf. Those wishing to complete the 7-day full circuit of Sicily then travel along the coast to Cefalù, site of another great Norman



Cathedral with its exquisite golden mosaics and of the stunning La Rocca, where we find a temple of Diana. Our journey then takes us into the Madonie mountains to stay at the ancient Sant'Anastasia Abbey. Our final night finds us in Taormina, below the slopes of Mt. Etna, for a discussion of the Odyssey and other stories of this coast, and visits to sites radiant with the town's glittering past. From there it is a short journey to Catania airport.

**Price:** \$1860 per person in double accommodations; \$2155 in single accommodations

**Includes all accommodations and all meals through breakfast on the 23rd, air-conditioned coach, entrance fees, fully-guided tour and transfer to Palermo's Centrale railway station on the 23rd**

**Price:** \$2275 per person in double accommodations; \$2800 in single accommodations

**Includes all of the above plus all additional meals, entrance fees, accommodations, air-conditioned coach, and transfer from Taormina to Catania International Airport on the 25th**





Mount Etna looms above the village of Regalbuto

## The Islands of Malta and Gozo:

*Microcosm of the Mediterranean*

June 18 - 23, 2013

with Karen Ralls, Ph.D.

The Maltese archipelago has been at the crossroads of history for millennia. Its ancient cities, spectacular scenery and natural ports offer a unique historical and spiritual experience. The fortified capital of Valletta, a UNESCO world heritage site, is a masterpiece of baroque architecture, built by the Knights of St. John, with votive statues, niches, fountains and coats of arms throughout. The Barrakka gardens provide a stunning view of Malta's Grand Harbor, a powerful testament to the heroic history of the island from the Middle Ages to the 20th century. We continue to the Grand Master's Palace, dating to the 16th century, then sail by *dghajsa*, traditional Maltese boats, to Vittoriosa, the Three Cities built by the Knights., to wander its atmospheric streets. From there, we travel to the ancient temples of Hagar Qim and Mnajdra, a megalithic temple complex that is one of the oldest religious sites on earth.

We then cross to the island of Gozo, smaller than Malta, where life moves at a leisurely pace, its rhythms dictated by the seasons, fishing and agriculture. Quieter, more solitary, rural, filled with picturesque bays and coves for contemplation, and penetrated by deep gorges, Gozo is steeped in myth and thought to be the legendary Calypso's isle of Homer's *Odyssey*. It is a peaceful, mystical place where



The Azure Window in Gozo

ornamented churches and stone farm houses dot the landscape. We will visit the Ggantija temples, the oldest free-standing buildings in the world, dating to 3800 BC, and see the Citadel, an ancient fortified city, and the Black Madonna of Ghajnsielem. Returning by ferry to Malta, we travel by the traditional *luzzu* boats to St. Paul's Bay, known for its views, peace and tranquility.

Then on to Mdina, the old capital of Malta, known as the 'Silent City' with its curved streets and palaces, and a venture into St. Paul's catacombs. Our Quest concludes with an optional visit to the fluorescent caves of the Blue Grotto where we may reflect on the multiple layers of history and spirituality that permeate these unique islands.

**Price:** \$1795 per person in double accommodations; \$2165 in single accommodations

**Includes one-way airfare from Catania to Malta, all airport transfers, all accommodations, meals, entrance fees, fully-guided tour, and ferry and air-conditioned coach transport**

## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

**Steve Bass, M.A.**, has practiced as an architect in New York City since 1974. He holds a Master of Arts degree from the Royal College of Art, London, where he studied under the direction of Keith Critchlow, and has been visiting assistant professor of architecture at Notre Dame University. He is a fellow of the Institute of Classical Architecture and is author of the forthcoming *Proportion in Architecture*.

**Paul Bembridge, M.Phil., FRSA**, is a specialist in European literature who teaches courses in the Western Esoteric Traditions for the University of Exeter in the UK. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and a long-standing contributor to the N.Y. Open Center's *Esoteric Quest* series.

**Leonard Chiarelli, Ph.D.**, is a Sicilian-American born in Brooklyn who specializes in the history of Sicily under Islamic rule. His *History of Muslim Sicily* is the first detailed study in English covering Sicily as part of the Arabo-Muslim world. He is librarian of the Aziz S. Atiya Library for Middle East Studies at the University of Utah.

**Paul Fenton, Ph.D.**, is professor of Hebrew Language and Literature in the Department of Arabic and Hebraic Studies at the Sorbonne. A scholar of both Hebrew and Arabic, he has explored extensively the intersection of Jewish and Islamic culture, especially in the areas of philosophy and mysticism. He is the author of numerous books and studies, including an edition of Ibn Waqar's *Principles of the Kabbalah*, and Judah Ibn Malka's *Commentary on the Sefer Yezira*.

**David Fideler, Ph.D.**, is the editor of the journal *Alexandria: Cosmology, Philosophy, Myth, and Culture*. His books include *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library*; *Love's Alchemy: Poems from the Sufi Tradition*; and *The Soul of the World: Understanding Our Bond with the Living Universe* (forthcoming).

**Leonard George, Ph.D.**, is a Canadian psychologist, educator, author and broadcaster. His academic affiliations include Capilano University, Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia. Author of two books, *Crimes of Perception* and *Alternative Realities*, he has been focused for many years on the spirituality of antiquity and as an advisor to the *Esoteric Quest* conferences.

**Joscelyn Godwin, Ph.D.**, is a leading scholar and writer on the Western Esoteric Tradition including its musical aspects. He teaches at Colgate University and has

written, edited and translated numerous books including *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth*, *The Spiritual Dimension of Music from Antiquity to the Avant-Garde*, and *Mystery Religions of the Ancient World*.

**Ellen Goldberg, M.A.**, is a psychotherapist who has been working within the Hermetic Tradition for thirty-five years. She has been on the faculty of the N.Y. Open Center since 1985 and taught at six previous *Esoteric Quest* conferences. Ellen is the founder and director of the School of Oracles and has a private psychotherapy practice in New York City.

**Clare Goodrick-Clarke, M.A.**, has been a faculty member of the N.Y. Open Center's *Esoteric Quest* conferences since 1995, and a founding faculty member of the Exeter Centre for the Study of Esotericism (EXESESO), at the University of Exeter, U.K., since 2005. At EXESESO, she teaches courses on the esoteric body, the history of medicine, and the history of alchemy.

**John Keahey** is the author of three books about Italy, most recently *Seeking Sicily: A Cultural Journey Through Myth and Reality in the Heart of the Mediterranean*. His other works include *Venice Against the Sea* and *A Sweet and Glorious Land: Revisiting the Ionian Sea*.

**Malcolm Kennard, Ph.D.**, has had a diverse career as an academic with many peer reviewed publications both in science and the arts. He has had a fascination with Frederick II from a young age, fostered by his father's original research and writings.

**Douglas Kenning, Ph.D.**, is of Sicilian heritage and has lived on the island for the last fifteen years. He divides his year between Sicily, where he runs a tour company, and the San Francisco area, where he lectures on Mediterranean histories and cultures.

**Alessandra Marchi, Ph.D.**, studied Sufism at the *Ecole des Hautes en Sciences Sociales* in Paris. Her research interests include the development of Sufism in the West, notably in Italy, and the transformation of its rituals and traditions. She is also working on the history of the Italian community in Egypt at the Centre for Alexandrian Studies in Alexandria.

**Christopher McIntosh, D.Phil.**, is a scholar and writer focused on the esoteric traditions. His books include *The Rose Cross and the Age of Reason*; *The Swan King: Ludwig II of Bavaria*; and *Gardens of*

*the Gods*. He teaches in Exeter University's Center for the Study of Esotericism.

**Scott Olsen, Ph.D.**, is a Professor of Philosophy and Comparative Religion at the College of Central Florida and the author of *The Golden Section: Nature's Greatest Secret* which was awarded first place for design by the Bookbinders' Guild of New York. Scott lectures widely on the Perennial Philosophy with special emphasis on the Divine Proportion and Transformative States of Consciousness.

**Karen Ralls, Ph.D.**, medieval historian and religions scholar, was Curator of the Rosslyn Chapel Museum Art exhibition prior to relocating to Oxford, where she continues her specialist 12th to 14th century research. Her books include *The Templars and the Grail*, *The Knights Templar Encyclopedia*, and the forthcoming *Sacred Doorways: History, Lore, Places and Symbolism of Twelve Medieval Mysteries*.

**Marjorie Roth, DMA, Ph.D.**, is Associate Professor of Music at Nazareth College in Rochester, NY, where she teaches Music History, Studio Flute, and Women's Studies, and directs the Honors program. She has recently published in a collection of essays on Music & Esotericism and, in August 2009, gave a presentation for the N.Y. Open Center on "Spiritualism and Feminism in 19th Century Upstate New York" and presented on "Divine Women: Cleopatra and Hypatia" last year in Alexandria.

**Mary Taylor Simeti** is an American writer who has lived in Sicily for almost forty years, and is the author of *On Perephone's Island, Pomp and Sustenance and Bitter Almonds*.

**Ralph White** is co-founder and creative director of the New York Open Center, one of America's leading institutions of holistic learning. He has directed and organized a series of ten international conferences on Western Esotericism, of which this is the latest.

### Conference Staff:

**Director:** Ralph White,  
New York Open Center

**Coordinator:** Carrie Wykoff,  
Events That Matter

**Registrar:** Andrea Lomanto,  
New York Open Center

**Director of Finance:** Nancy Rotger,  
New York Open Center

**On-Site Curator:** Lalena Kurtz

# CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

## Conference Fee

**Course Code: 13SQUEST**

**Registration through  
February 15, 2013: \$2145**

**Through March 15, 2013: \$2295**

**Through April 17, 2013: \$2445**

**The conference fee includes the full conference program, afternoon activities, evening events, all meals, and round-trip transfer between Catania and Ortigia.**

## Accommodations Fee

Accommodations are provided in Ortigia, Siracusa, for the five nights of Thursday, June 13 through Tuesday, June 18.

**June 13-18** in Ortigia (total pricing for five nights' stay)

**Double rooms:** \$405 per person;

**Single rooms:** \$660

**Upgraded double rooms:** \$540 per person;

**Upgraded single rooms:** \$825

For booking double rooms, please specify whether you will be attending as a couple, sharing a room with a friend, or wish to have a roommate arranged for you by the Open Center (pending availability).

## Registration

The Open Center invites you to register on our website at [www.EsotericQuest.org](http://www.EsotericQuest.org), where you will find our complete registration information and payment form. Payment is required to secure your registration.

## Payment

All payment is in US dollars. Please pay by credit card, international money order or personal check (US bank accounts only). Prices do not include travel to and from Catania, Italy. An affordable payment plan for the conference is available. Please contact Andrea Lomanto at 212.219.2527 ext. 101, or at [quest@opencenter.org](mailto:quest@opencenter.org) for details.

## Travel Arrangements

Participants must make their own travel arrangements to and from Catania, Italy (or home from either Palermo or Malta if you are joining us for any parts of our post-conference trips).

## Arrival in Catania

Participants will arrive at Catania's Fontanarossa International Airport (CTA) on June 13, where they will be met by a conference representative and travel by coach to their accommodations in Ortigia. Those of us attending the Pre-Conference Tour of Mt. Etna will arrive on June 11 and spend their first evening in Catania.

## About the Conference

The conference begins with our opening night reception and dinner in Ortigia in the evening of June 13. Each day, we will have morning plenary sessions followed by lunch at a variety of restaurants in the old city. Afternoon activities include explorations of the island, a choice of workshops to attend, and dinner. In the evenings we will gather for cultural events. The conference ends after lunch on Tuesday, June 18 with our coach ride back to Catania's Fontanarossa Airport.

## Refunds

A full refund, less a \$200 processing fee, is offered for cancellations made by Friday, March 15, 2013. Travel insurance is strongly recommended in the event of unexpectedly having to cancel or change your travel plans either before or during the conference, losing your luggage, needing medical assistance, or if the program is affected by circumstances beyond our control.

## Scholarships / Work Study

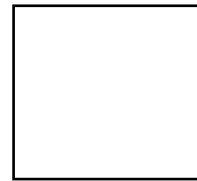
A limited number of partial scholarships are available. A scholarship application can be found on our website at [www.esotericquest.org](http://www.esotericquest.org).

*“To have seen Italy without having seen Sicily is not to have seen Italy at all, for Sicily is the clue to everything.”*

—Goethe



22 East 30th Street  
New York, NY 10016



The New York Open Center Presents  
AN ESOTERIC QUEST FOR

# Ancient Arabic and Medieval Sicily

*On the Isle of Ortigia, Siracusa, Sicily*

June 13 to 18, 2013



## CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

**Pythagoras through the Ages** – Joscelyn Godwin, Ph.D.

**Into the Volcano: The Teachings of Empedocles**  
– Leonard George, Ph.D.

**Food and Festivities: Sicily's Classical Heritage**  
– Mary Taylor Simeti

**Archimedes and the 13 Semi-Regular Solids**  
– Scott Olsen, Ph.D.

**Muslim Sicily** – Leonard Chiarelli, Ph.D.

**Sufism in Italy during the Medieval period**  
– Alessandra Marchi, Ph.D.

**Prophetic Kabbalah and a 13th Century Rabbi's Mission to the Pope: In the Footsteps of Rabbi Abraham Abulafiya**  
– Paul Fenton, Ph.D.

**East meets West: The Intriguing Court of Roger II of Sicily** –  
Karen Ralls, Ph.D.

**"The Wonder of the World": Frederick II of Hohenstaufen and his Sicilian Court** – Christopher McIntosh, D.Phil.

**The Tarantella: Music, Magic and Medicine in Magna Graecia** – Marjorie Roth, Ph.D., DMA

## POST CONFERENCE JOURNEYS

**Journey through Sicily, June 18 – 23 or June 18 – 25, 2013**  
with Douglas Kenning, Ph.D.

**The Islands of Malta and Gozo: Microcosm of the Mediterranean, June 18 – 23, 2013** with Karen Ralls, Ph.D.

[www.EsotericQuest.org](http://www.EsotericQuest.org)