

Maison méditerranéenne des sciences de l'Homme (Mediterranean Foundation for the Human Sciences)

The *Maison méditerranéenne des sciences de l'Homme* (Mediterranean Foundation for the Human Sciences, or MMSH) is a research and education campus specializing in the humanities and social sciences and a constituent entity of Aix-Marseille University supported by a CNRS Support and Research Unit (UAR 3125).

As a platform for supporting and facilitating research, the MMSH includes 10 Mixed Research Units based on site and hosts Doctoral School 355 (“Spaces, Cultures, Societies”) and two institutes, the Institute of Mediterranean Archeology (Arkaia) and the Institute for Changing Societies in the Mediterranean (SoMuM).

A member of the Foundations for the Human Sciences (RnMSH) / Research Infrastructure (IR) National Network listed on the national research roadmap since 2012, and in accordance with the charter governing the network, the MMSH aims to promote the academic work of its associated units and research units at the Aix-Marseille site dedicated to studying the Mediterranean and sub-Saharan African regions from a comparative perspective. It supports multi- and interdisciplinary initiatives from prehistory to the contemporary period by funding a range of research programs. It provides units and programs with a range of support services, including IT services, logistics, publishing services, academic communication and culture services, support with promotion and visibility, and digital and documentary resources.

The MMSH develops the national platforms of the *Très Grandes Infrastructures de Recherche* (Very Large Research Infrastructures) of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research and Innovation (PROGEDO and Huma-Num) for the AMU teams through a range of dedicated services.

As part of a five-year (2024-2027) contract, the MMSH remains dedicated to supporting comparative Mediterranean and African studies, the programs of the units hosted on site, and the development of documentary and technical tools. It is also developing new missions on writing in the humanities and social sciences, a workshop on participatory sciences, and the academic visibility of the MMSH in Marseille.

SERVICES

Administration and Management

The mission of the “Administration and Management” service is to implement and oversee the administrative and financial management of the MMSH entity and the UAR3125/MMSH. The service is also responsible for managing the human resources of both structures. Both responsibilities involve close collaboration with the relevant central services at AMU and/or the regional CNRS delegation.

Logistics

The logistics service is responsible for the general operation of the building and its technical installations, for performing routine local maintenance, and for ensuring the safety of the building's occupants and users. The service is also responsible for central reception services and for overseeing the use of communal areas, including 1 lecture hall (180 seats), 4 conference rooms (24-80 seats) and 8 classrooms (30-70 seats), all of which are available subject to conditions. The MMSH premises are open Monday to Saturday from 7:30am to 8:00pm.

Communication and Promotion

With its dual mission to manage both institutional communication and academic and cultural promotion, the Communication and Promotion service leads on promoting the humanities and social sciences by focusing on the specificities of the MMSH based on the interdisciplinarity of Mediterranean studies. The service works to promote the academic approach and its key stakeholders and to ensure the transmission of knowledge to a wide audience. As an interface for territorial and cultural actors and a networking facilitator, the service's core work focuses on partnership building, events, production, and mediation, with its key activities including the coordination of public meetings and managing audiovisual media, exhibitions, and educational activities. The service also supports the MMSH's policy on participatory research, in line with the relevant policies of the CNRS and AMU.

International Partnerships

The International Partnerships service implements the MMSH's international cooperation policy, supports the international policy of Aix-Marseille University and the CNRS, and promotes the international collaboration activities undertaken by associated research units. Since 2022, the MMSH has supported the GlobalMed network (<https://globalmed.hypotheses.org/>), which aims to bring together institutions working across all the disciplines of the humanities and social sciences and covering all periods based on a global approach to the Mediterranean.

Publishing

Our publishing service supports the publication and dissemination of specialized academic publications devoted to the Mediterranean world. It is linked to the [MMSH publishing center](#), bringing together the site's academic publishing professionals (UAR/UMR/Institutes). In conjunction with the MMSH editorial committee, the service works to promote the production and visibility of work committed to shedding multidisciplinary light on cross-cutting themes relevant to the Mediterranean area from prehistory to the present.

Interdisciplinary Research

The service provides support for collaborative research across the MMSH's research laboratories and the AMU through calls for projects. It implements the academic policy and thematic priorities of the MMSH with the support of the UAR academic council.

The service is responsible for the following activities:

- inter-laboratory seminars (annual call)

- cross-cutting research programs (biennial call)
- thematic networks
- specific programs (observatories and MMSH certified programs)

The service provides expertise prior to, during, and after projects, as well as assistance with the management, coordination and implementation of programs and teams. It ensures optimal use of shared AMU and CNRS resources through administrative and academic support and expertise in public research policies. It supports the incubation of humanities and social science projects associated with other non-academic fields.

CENTERS

Libraries & Archives

The Libraries and Archives Center of the MMSH is an interdisciplinary and multilingual documentary platform dedicated to supporting the digital transition of research practices as well as their relevance and accessibility. Working in partnership with associated research units, the center brings together the teams of the Aix-en-Provence Antiquity Library, the Prehistory Library, the Multimedia Humanities and Social Sciences Library, and the MMSH archives services. Its members work to pool their skills and develop a shared service offering for users of the Aix-Marseille site and the academic community in France and internationally. The Libraries and Archives Unit combines analog and digital resources and implements the MMSH's open science strategy across all aspects of academic documentation and research archives.

Multimedia Humanities and Social Sciences Library

As a multimedia, multicultural and multilingual resource center dedicated to supporting innovative research and a key resource center for areal studies on North Africa and the Middle East (ANMO/MENA), the Mediterranean and Africa, the Multimedia Library promotes bibliodiversity. Recognized as a collection of excellence by the CollEx-Persée research infrastructure, the center contains nearly 140,000 works, including 40,000 in Arabic and 4,000 periodicals, of which 1,000 are in Arabic. In accordance with applicable ethical and legal standards, it contains and makes available more than 500 LM of archival funds produced or collected by researchers. A pioneer in the field of sound and audiovisual archives, the Media Library has developed international partnerships that have helped to position it as a leader in these areas. Through its work on structuring digital scholarship, the Media Library team actively contributes to the development of open science by fostering accessibility and digitally promoting its collections. With a network that shines at the local, national, and international levels, the center contributes to the advancement of digital research and academic culture in the Mediterranean and related worlds.

BIAA and Prehistory

The Aix-en-Provence Antiquity (BIAA) and Prehistory libraries are documentary resource centers dedicated to research. Between them, they contain 61,000 works, 2,295 periodicals (of which 318 are current), 90,000 offprints, and 3,100 gray literature documents (university reports and publications).

The BiAA has a particularly rich collection on Greek colonization in the West and the archeology of southern Gaul and Roman Africa. The prehistory library specializes in North Africa and Saharan Africa. They are among the largest French libraries specializing in archaeology.

The libraries are members of the Frantiq network (GDS 3378), and their [catalogue is accessible online](#). They contribute to the [shared conservation plan for periodicals in the sciences of Antiquity](#) and their collections of periodicals have been listed as a collection of excellence by the CollEx-Persée research infrastructure for national archaeology. They contribute to the promotion of research and the development of open science by participating in projects to [digitalize collections](#).

Research Archives sector, Multimedia Humanities and Social Sciences Library

In the multimedia library, the “Research Archives” sector contains heritage collections from across the humanities and social sciences. The archives team manages both historical and more recent resources produced or collected by researchers (including paper documents, field notebooks, films, cassettes and tapes, glass plates, slides, prints, tracings and plans, web data, native digital files) and maintains reading tools. As part of a commitment to making the archives accessible to as many people as possible, the team is working to develop unified access to the data and to support readers to facilitate research.

– More than 600 LM of archives, 10,000 photographs and 8,000 hours of filmed or recorded field investigations.

– Access to the archives (by appointment) is governed by the regulations of the French Heritage Code (article L.213-1) in accordance with the legal and ethical rules defined by the producers.

Publishing

Created in 2021 following a partnership between the MMSH, the site's research units and the ARKAIA and SoMuM Institutes of Aix-Marseille University, the Publishing Center brings together staff specializing in publishing, the publication of digital collections, and information and documentary resources.

Publishing

Founded in 2021 following a partnership between the MMSH, the site’s research units and the ARKAIA and SoMuM Institutes of Aix-Marseille University, the Publishing Center brings together staff specializing in publishing, the publication of digital collections, and information and documentary resources. The center promotes the publication and dissemination of academic books, journals, and collections with the support of research teams, with its primary area of geographical specialization being the Mediterranean. It implements and develops good practices in digital publishing as part of a concerted open science approach (publications and data) and supports academic teams in the delivery of their projects. In doing so, it contributes to the development of a common publishing support policy for the outputs of the site and its partners.

Digital Platforms

Digital humanities

While continuing its mission to maintain the platforms created within the framework of the RAMSES network (DicoMed, Mediamed, Cinumed), the service initiates and develops new tools and provides support to the entire MMSH community in the interdisciplinary field of digital humanities through projects at the intersection of digital publishing, documentation, digital resources and heritage promotion and enhancement.

Huma-num box

Huma-num Box is a storage system operated by IR* Huma-Num (<https://www.huma-num.fr>) developed to store sets of warm and cold data.

Cartomundi

Cartomundi offers a range of services managed by the MMSH and dedicated to promoting cartographic heritage. Its services are provided through a public research and consultation website and a network for collaboration between institutions working to preserve cartographic documents. The program is supported by GIS CollEx-Persée.

Launched in 2011, the Cartomundi website now offers more than 80,000 references and 10,000 reproductions, with a plan to commission a new version in 2023.

PUD-AMU / PROGEDO

The Aix-Marseille University Data Platform (PUD-AMU) supports researchers in the research, use, processing, and statistical analysis of quantitative data. The platform provides personalized support and advice at the different stages of research involving the use of quantitative data.

Audiovisual

Images-Sounds & Social Science Research

Founded in 1998, the Images-Sounds and Social Sciences Research Center is a transversal research program that cuts across the activities of the various MMSH laboratories. Its key fields include image studies, field interviews, media, and film conceived as data for research purposes and as objects of investigation or representation of reality. Focused on the practices and challenges of online communication and the development of social media, the center is dedicated to the exploration of digital humanities and, specifically, visual studies, with a particular interest in the question of writing practices and knowledge production associated with new digital data structuring tools. Activities in this area include publications, collaborative study and action days, and the dissemination of good practices. The center has also been awarded several national and international research programs that have led to concrete actions for the development of digital humanities.

Interdisciplinary research

Multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity have been among the key missions of the MMSHs since their foundation. The confrontation of different disciplines and methods is now widely

recognized as the best way to advance knowledge and impact society positively in a world faced with major challenges. The MMSH promotes collaboration across the humanities and social sciences, but also with the health, life, natural, and environmental sciences as well as the earth, digital, and engineering sciences. Through calls for projects for seminars and interdisciplinary programs, networks, and thematic observatories covering the broad field of Mediterranean studies, the MMSH seeks to incubate innovative projects in preparation for national or international calls.

International

The MMSH has a policy of both building contractual partnerships and developing [international research programs](#) (see bottom of page).

International partnerships

The MMSH's research units are involved in a wide range of research partnerships at the international level with UMIFREs, EFes, and foreign higher education and research institutions. The MMSH supports these initiatives by formalizing international cooperation agreements (covering all its research units) with international institutions involved in regular research partnerships with several of its units.

With the support of the international service of Aix-Marseille University's Research and Development Department, agreements have been signed by AMU on behalf of the MMSH with the following partners.

Open Science

Open science is a movement aimed at disseminating and sharing academic knowledge and production with the academic community as a whole as well as society more generally and a broad range of audiences as part of a knowledge transfer and sharing objective. Academic practices and uses based on digital tools allow for research findings and data to be more easily accessible, disseminated, reusable, and applicable in a more transversal way. The MMSH is actively supporting this trend, and its various laboratories, institutes and services are all developing systems, driving initiatives, and producing formats that contribute to the development of open science. The objectives pursued are tailored to meet the recommendations of the RNMSHS, the French Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, and the CNRS and are particularly geared toward activities aiming to:

- Develop and revitalize fields of knowledge within the humanities and social sciences
- Publish, promote, and disseminate research data to a wide audience
- Promote collaborative and interdisciplinary work
- Offer innovative approaches and formats
- Contribute to the process of transforming academic publishing
- Promote the design and deployment of platforms
- Encourage the sharing and capitalization of good practices in data management

- Promote training through research.

Science and Society

Socio-economic development and partnerships

The MMSH has placed socio-economic development and partnerships at the heart of its work. In a strongly incentivizing context shaped by the policy of our supervisory authorities, the CNRS and Aix-Marseille University, the MMSH has been a proactive creative force at events held to promote innovation in the humanities and social sciences and the AMU/Business Week, and has also initiated a rapprochement with SATT Sud-Est. In addition, the MMSH is working to develop initiatives capable of promoting the activities and outputs of associated teams in collaboration with local authorities (regions, departments, municipalities, intercommunities, etc.) and regional, national, and international businesses. The MMSH is also in the process of mapping activities and projects supported at the MMSH (USR and associated Units).

Academic culture

Academic culture matters to society as a whole. It helps citizens to understand the world in which they live and to prepare for the world of tomorrow. It helps to position science within society by promoting exchanges, sharing knowledge, and educating informed and engaged citizens. It also matters to local authorities.

At the MMSH, a dedicated service is piloting an academic culture policy designed for a wide range of audiences, working in close collaboration with all its associated laboratories and partners in the cultural, association, and territorial spheres. The MMSH's policy has three main components: innovative event management, collaboration and partnerships, and the provision of educational resources.

Fabriques de la connaissance (Factories of Knowledge)

From territory to laboratory

The MSH of Nice and Aix-en-Provence are partners of the *Fabriques de la Connaissance* (Factories of Knowledge) program, which involves a range of activities and studies. One of the program's key activities is the promotion of studies supported by the *Région Sud* (Territorial Knowledge Service). This section provides insight into these emerging studies and projects, particularly those led by laboratories associated with the region's two MSHs.

Factories of Knowledge: a constructive dialogue between the humanities and social sciences and local policies

Since 2015, the *Région Sud* and the higher education and research institutions based in the region have been involved in a fruitful collaborative initiative known as the “Factories of Knowledge”.

Representing one of the cornerstones of the regional strategy for territorial knowledge adopted by the *Conseil Régional* (Regional Council) in October 2017, this partnership initiative positions the Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur region as one of the most advanced regional authorities for **collaboration between local public bodies and the research and higher education sectors**.

The objective of the partnership is threefold:

- to develop innovative academic studies focused on current issues and challenges in the regional space and among its various stakeholders.
- to confront them with different regional policies and intervention frameworks.
- to promote them and make them accessible to the public.

Collaboration is based on a shared observation: **the need to incorporate the humanities and social sciences into local policies**. The profound societal and economic changes we are currently experiencing, the upheavals associated with the rise of digital technology, the uncertainties produced by globalization and multiple crises (whether financial, social or health-related), the territorial developments and the new challenges raised by global warming and the ecological transition are all major challenges facing the region’s territories.

Homemade

Digital resources and platforms, virtual exhibitions and book collections are designed, produced, and published online by the MMSH. They benefit the community of researchers in the humanities and social sciences, secondary school teachers, and a broader audience eager for knowledge. The aim is to consolidate dispersed knowledge centrally through documentary portals (Cinumed, Mediamed), to provide open access to the royalty-free heritage collections of its libraries (e-media library), to offer innovative content on topics such as sport in the *Région Sud* (TEPAS), to promote exhibitions held at the MMSH, to produce high-quality work in the field of Mediterranean studies and, finally, to disseminate the MMSH’s publications in open science (DicoMed).

LABORATORIES

Institute for Research on Ancient Architecture

Thematic keywords

- History
- Civilizations
- Archeology

- Arts of the ancient and medieval worlds
- Africa
- Europe
- The Mediterranean
- Architecture

Description of the project

IRAA's specific mission is to promote collaboration between architects trained in architecture schools and researchers specializing in the study of ancient architecture and its classical documentary contexts, including the archaeology of furniture, ancient literature, and epigraphy (archaeologists, historians, art historians). Participating researchers come from a range of institutional backgrounds. Collaboration between researchers and architects applies to the full end-to-end research process. The Institute for Research on Ancient Architecture is the only unit of its kind in France and is one of a handful of European institutions specializing in ancient architecture. The MMSH is home to IRAA's Aix team.

Institute of African Worlds

- Anthropology
- History
- Circulation of knowledge
- Political economics
- Religion
- Art
- Gender
- Africa
- Diachronics
- Middle Ages
- Modern period
- Contemporary period

IMAF was founded on January 1, 2014 from the merger of three laboratories: the Center for the Study of African Worlds (CEMAf), the Center for African Studies (CEAf), and the Center for the Social History of Mediterranean Islam (CHSIM). It was previously based at four sites (Aix-en-Provence, Ivry-sur-Seine, rue Malher and boulevard Raspail in Paris) before the three Paris sites were consolidated into a single location at the Condorcet campus (Aubervilliers) in September 2019. MMSH is home to the Aix team (formerly CEMAf), which is also involved in two master's degrees in anthropology and a master's degree in history at Aix-Marseille University.

Institute for Research and Studies on the Arab and Muslim Worlds

- Classical languages and literatures
- Comparative literatures

- Languages, literatures and cultures of Africa, Asia and other linguistic areas
- Sociology, demography
- History, civilizations, archeology, and the arts of the ancient and medieval worlds
- History and civilizations: history of modern worlds, history of the contemporary world; art; music
- Physical, human, economic, and regional geography
- Africa
- Europe
- The Mediterranean
- The Middle East

IREMAM's complex mission includes research, documentation, research training, hosting, publishing, and dissemination of knowledge. It is also a doctoral laboratory associated with two doctoral schools at Aix-Marseille University and acts as the host unit for four research master's programs. Around fifty students of all nationalities receive training in research careers across the humanities and social sciences. Finally, the laboratory has developed many partnerships with research centers on the southern shores of the Mediterranean and forged close ties with French research centers abroad.

Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology

- Anthropology
- Contemporary worlds
- Religion
- Kinship
- Gender
- Subjectivation
- Heterographies
- Music
- Heritage
- Materiality

IDEAS (formerly known as IDEMEC) is a general anthropology research unit co-run by Aix-Marseille University and the CNRS (UMR 7307). The unit's research program is structured around the [anthropology of plurality](#) and aims to understand social practices, the construction of subjects, aesthetics, and epistemologies characterized in the contemporary world by the co-presence of several social and cultural models. IDEAS combines disciplinary tradition and thematic and methodological innovation. Its members have produced distinguished work in fields including the anthropology of religions, the anthropology of the body, the anthropology of kinship, the anthropology of techniques, ethnomusicology, audio-visual anthropology, and the anthropology of heritage.

Times, Spaces, Languages. Southern Europe and the Mediterranean

- Comparative literatures

- Languages, literatures and cultures of Africa, Asia, and other linguistic areas
- History and civilizations: history of modern worlds, history of the contemporary world; art; music
- Physical, human, economic and regional geography
- Urban and regional planning
- Africa
- Europe
- The Mediterranean

TELEMMMe is a joint research unit of Aix-Marseille University and the CNRS that includes historians, art historians, Hispanists and geographers. The work of its members focuses on understanding key social issues in southern Europe and the Mediterranean. The expertise of the laboratory has been developed through prospective studies examining migratory movements, the modalities of production and exchange, the formation of cities, cultural and memorial circulation, political spaces, the body, gender, and the formation of identities in societies on the northern shores of the Mediterranean. From the individual to the territory via the community, the laboratory's researchers work to uncover the totality of the bonds that make up communities.

History and Archeology of the Mediterranean and North Africa from Protohistory to the end of Antiquity

- History
- Civilizations
- Archeology
- Arts of the ancient and medieval worlds
- Africa
- Europe
- The Mediterranean

The Camille Jullian Center is a history and archeology laboratory dedicated to conducting research in archaeology and ancient history around the Mediterranean rim and in North Africa, covering periods ranging from Protohistory to Late Antiquity. Its programs aim to achieve a better understanding of the societies of the Mediterranean basin, from Protohistory to Late Antiquity, making it a major center for archeology recognized by the entire academic community both in France and abroad.

Laboratory for Medieval and Modern Archeology in the Mediterranean

- Romance studies
- Ethnology, prehistory, biological anthropology
- History, civilizations, archeology, and the arts of the ancient and medieval worlds

- History and civilizations: history of modern worlds, history of the contemporary world; art; music
- Physical, human, economic and regional geography
- Urban and regional planning

The LA3M laboratory conducts interdisciplinary research covering the periods of Late Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and modern times up to the contemporary era. Its work covers a wide area extending from Central Asia to the Antilles, with an emphasis on the Mediterranean Rim. Its academic activities focus on three main areas.

Texts and Documents of the Ancient and Medieval Mediterranean

- Ancient languages and literatures
- Comparative literatures
- Romance studies
- Languages, literatures and cultures of Africa, Asia, and other linguistic areas
- Philosophy
- History, civilizations, archeology, and the arts of the ancient and medieval worlds
- Music
- Africa
- Europe
- The Mediterranean

The TDMAM laboratory conducts interdisciplinary research on the history of religions and texts, covering both the classical and biblical traditions. The laboratory includes philologists, linguists, historians, Egyptologists, and philosophers specializing in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Coptic, Sanskrit, Arabic and Armenian, and comprises academics, CNRS researchers, doctoral students, and secondary school teachers. Their work feeds into French and international research networks.

Mediterranean Center for Sociology, Political Science, and History

- Sociology, demography
- History and civilizations: history of modern worlds, history of the contemporary world; art; music
- Physical, human, economic, and regional geography
- Urban and regional planning
- Africa
- Europe
- The Mediterranean

MESOPOLHIS is a multidisciplinary social sciences unit founded in January 2021 by Aix-Marseille University, Sciences Po Aix, and the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS). Created from the merger of LAMES (UMR 7305) and CHERPA (EA 4261), MESOPOLHIS now

holds a unique position in the regional and national academic landscape, bringing together researchers and teacher-researchers from a range of social science disciplines.

Mediterranean Laboratory for the Prehistory of Europe and Africa

- Ethnology
- Prehistory
- Biological anthropology
- Africa
- Europe
- The Mediterranean

LAMPEA operates under the supervision of the CNRS, Aix Marseille University, and the French Ministry of Culture and has an agreement with INRAP. Its overall academic mission is the study of past organizations, transformations, and evolutions of past (prehistoric) human societies in their biological and environmental dimensions. Taking a systemic perspective, the laboratory has identified systems analysis as one of the most important ways of understanding past societies.

Doctoral School – Spaces, Cultures, Societies

Based at the MMSH in Aix-en-Provence (Jas de Bouffan), Doctoral School 355, known as “Spaces, Cultures, Societies”, was founded in 1999. As part of its commitment to multidisciplinary, the school welcomes doctoral students working in research fields within the humanities and social sciences, with a particular focus on Mediterranean studies. The school is led by Laure Verdon, Professor of Medieval History, assisted by Stéphanie Savidan.

ED 355 includes 19 research units covering 4 major thematic areas in the humanities and social sciences:

- Space, environment, and societies
- Ancient and contemporary worlds
- Norms, institutions, and social behaviors
- Languages, texts, arts, and cultures.

18 research units

14 disciplines

Anthropology, Arab, Muslim and Semitic Worlds, Archeology, Architecture, Asian Societies and Cultures, Demography, Geography, History, History of Art, Prehistory, Romance Studies, Sciences of Antiquity, Sociology, Urban and Regional Planning.

<https://ecole-doctorale-355.univ-amu.fr/>