Presentation and Discussion Points; Tariq Ali, *The Sultan of Palermo*, CERIS, October 21, 2016

[Page/Text References will be given during the presentation]

1. Person and Career of Tariq Ali
2. Punjabi landlord, Democratic Political Leader in Pakistan, Left Activist UK
3. The Islam Quintet – Cosmopolitan, Tolerant Enlightenment Islam Lost to Us
4. Arab-Norman Sicily – Sultan Rujari/King Roger (Photo Handout: Royal Mantle)
5. Architecture – Royal Chapel, Capella Palatina – UNESCO
6. Handout Photos, The Mosaic Tile
7. Blended Culture
8. Muhammad al-Idrisi: Geographer and Cartographer (Map Handout)- Main Character
9. Themes in *The Sultan of Palermo*
10. Islam had a Golden Age – but it was NOT the Republic of Medina beloved by Salafis but cosmopolitan Caliphates.
11. Nostalgia a powerful and continuous force, not only in community life but especially in that of individual lives.
12. The fateful turn in Islam was when puritanical literalists overcame more open minded cosmopolitans (also true with Christian Sicily when Lombard barons and bishops supplanted the Normans).
13. The career of the Trusted One in the Novel.
14. Advocated Ibn Rushd over Al-Ghazali then lost way.
15. Patterned on real life person of Jamal al-Din-al-Afghani
16. Also results in a sense of the loss of the Fabulous and Marvelous in Islam (Sura 51 of Quran) in Islamic thought. Tariq Ali and Robert Irwin
17. Al-Idrisi is a geographer with a taste for great variety, example of marvelous
18. The character Thawdor and varieties of music (fundamentalists oppose music)
19. Conflict between Literalism and Science
20. Evocation of Long Past World
21. Even Smells and Fragrances
22. But also how far this world from ours – no laughing except among equals, never in front of servants and lower orders. Marriage arrangements. World of hierarchy.
23. Expediency, Hesitancy and Uncertainty in Life.
24. Idrisi travelling to Syracuse
25. Good People Suffer Anguish, Evil People do not – the monk Antonio
26. The Sacrifice of Philip al-Mahdi
27. Often little indicators in life – realized in retrospect – No Christians for the first time not at the Amir of Syracuse’s banquet
28. Attraction of the book beyond poignant evocation/plea for Christian-Muslim cooperation, no more, a joint cosmopolitanism against fanaticism, the portrayal of a good man of intellect amidst passing and tragedy, from public life to the suicide of a daughter.
29. Some Discussion Points
30. Was Islamic Golden Age that of the Caliphates? Were they Cosmopolitan? The refutation of the Islamic history of Ibn Khaldun (empires-luxury-puritan nomads), the dominant way of viewing Islamic history.
31. Does pursuit of the doctrinal and fundamentalist path lead to intolerance? Why are the cosmopolitan and complex weak in the face of this?
32. Is Nostalgia so powerful in life, society and religion? When did Islam stop represent moving forward (the conversation between al-Idrisi and Roger in which al-Idris sees Christianity as a backward pagan goddess cult)
33. Why have episodes like Arab-Norman Sicily been forgotten and overlooked? Do people realized that some Christian states like this actively opposed Crusades?