



ATHENS INSTITUTE

Abstract Book

18th Annual International Conference on
Mediterranean Studies
14-18 April 2025, Athens, Greece

Edited by
Steven Oberhelman & Olga Gkounta

2025

Abstracts
18th Annual International
Conference on Mediterranean
Studies
14-18 March 2025, Athens,
Greece

Edited by Steven Oberhelman &
Olga Gkounta

First published in Athens, Greece by the Athens Institute.

ISBN: 978-960-598-670-4

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9 Chalkokondili Street, 10677 Athens, Greece

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Preface

This book includes the abstracts of all the papers presented at the 18th Annual International Conference on Mediterranean Studies (14-18 April 2025), organized by the Athens Institute.

A full conference program can be found before the relevant abstracts. In accordance with the Athens Institute’s Publication Policy, the papers presented during this conference will be considered for inclusion in one of Athens Institute’s many publications only after a blind peer review process.

The purpose of this abstract book is to provide members of the Athens Institute and other academics around the world with a resource through which they can discover colleagues and additional research relevant to their own work. This purpose is in congruence with the overall mission of the association. The Athens Institute was established in 1995 as an independent academic organization with the mission to become a forum where academics and researchers from all over the world can meet to exchange ideas on their research and consider the future developments of their fields of study.

To facilitate the communication, a new references section includes all the abstract books published as part of this conference (Table 1). I invite the readers to access these abstract books –these are available for free– and compare how the themes of the conference have evolved over the years. According to the Athens Institute’s mission, the presenters in these conferences are coming from many different countries, presenting various topics.

Table 1. *Publication of Books of Abstracts of Proceedings, 2011-2025*

Year	Papers	Countries	References
2025	25	11	Oberhelman and Gkounta (2025)
2024	23	10	Pappas and Gkounta (2024)
2023	37	18	Oberhelman and Gkounta (2023)
2022	18	12	Oberhelman and Gkounta (2022)
2021	18	7	Papanikos (2021)
2020	13	9	Papanikos (2020)
2019	46	20	Papanikos (2019)
2018	33	13	Papanikos (2018)
2017	38	18	Papanikos (2017)
2016	40	25	Papanikos (2016)
2015	49	23	Papanikos (2015)
2014	38	20	Papanikos (2014)
2013	56	25	Papanikos (2013)
2012	54	22	Papanikos (2012)
2011	38	16	Papanikos (2011)

It is our hope that through Athens Institute's conferences and publications, Athens will become a place where academics and researchers from all over the world can regularly meet to discuss the developments of their disciplines and present their work. Since 1995, the Athens Institute has organized more than 400 international conferences and has published over 200 books. Academically, the institute is organized into 7 divisions and 37 units. Each unit organizes at least one annual conference and undertakes various small and large research projects.

For each of these events, the involvement of multiple parties is crucial. I would like to thank all the participants, the members of the organizing and academic committees, and most importantly the administration staff of the Athens Institute for putting this conference and its subsequent publications together. Specific individuals are listed after the Editors' Note.

Gregory T. Papanikos
President

Editors' Note

These abstracts provide a vital means to the dissemination of scholarly inquiry in the field of Mediterranean Studies. The breadth and depth of research approaches and topics represented in this book underscores the diversity of the conference.

Athens Institute's mission is to bring together academics from all corners of the world in order to engage with each other, brainstorm, exchange ideas, be inspired by one another, and once they are back in their institutions and countries to implement what they have acquired. The 18th Annual International Conference on Mediterranean Studies accomplished this goal by bringing together academics and scholars from 11 different countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Israel, Malaysia, Portugal, South Korea, Spain, Türkiye, UK, USA), which brought in the conference the perspectives of many different country approaches and realities in the field.

Publishing this book can help that spirit of engaged scholarship continue into the future. With our joint efforts, the next editions of this conference will be even better. We hope that this abstract book as a whole will be both of interest and of value to the reading audience.

Steven Oberhelman & Olga Gkounta
Editors

**18th Annual International Conference on Mediterranean
Studies, 14-18 April 2025, Athens, Greece**

Organizing & Scientific Committee

All Athens Institute's conferences are organized by the Academic Council. This conference has been organized with the assistance of the following academic members of the Athens Institute, who contributed by reviewing the submitted abstracts and papers.

1. Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos, President, Athens Institute.
2. Dr. Steven Oberhelman, Vice President of International Programs, Athens Institute, Interim Dean & Professor of Classics, Holder of the George Sumey Jr Endowed Professorship of Liberal Arts, and Texas A&M University, USA.
3. Dr. Nicholas Pappas, Vice President of Academic Conferences and Meetings, Athens Institute & Professor of History, Sam Houston University, USA.
4. Dr. David Philip Wick, Director, Arts, Humanities and Education Division, Athens Institute & Retired Professor of History, Gordon College, USA.
5. Dr. Jayoung Che, Head, Director, Center for European & Mediterranean Affairs (CEMA) & Visiting Professor, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, South Korea.

FINAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM
18th Annual International Conference on Mediterranean Studies, 14-18 April 2025, Athens, Greece

PROGRAM

Monday 14 April 2025

8.00-08.30

Registration

08:30-09:00

Opening and Welcoming Remarks:

- **Gregory T. Papanikos**, President, Athens Institute.

09:00-11:00 Session 1

Moderator: Pinar Akinci Acar, Associate Professor, Istanbul Medipol University, Türkiye.

1. **Steven Oberhelman**, Professor, Texas A&M University, USA.
Title: Doctors and Healthcare in the Greek War of Independence.
2. **Bok Hee Kim**, Professor, Gyeongkuk National University, South Korea.
Title: Heroic Features and Arete in Homer's Athletics.
3. **Dario Borim**, Chairperson/Professor, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, USA.
Title: The Implicit Historian with an Anthropological Eye in Her Mother's Mother's Mother and Her Daughters.
4. **Gregory T. Papanikos**, President, Athens Institute.
Title: Is the Thucydides Trap Relevant to the Rise and Fall of the Ottoman Empire? A Cliometric Analysis.

11:00-12:30 Session 2

Moderator: Steven Oberhelman, Professor of Classics, Holder of the George Sumey Jr Endowed Professorship of Liberal Arts, and Interim Dean, Texas A&M University, USA, Acting Head, History Unit, Athens Institute and Editor of the Athens Journal of History.

1. **Ivana Podnar**, Assistant Professor, University of Zagreb, Croatia.
Title: Transformation of Island Iconography under the Influence of Industrial Architecture – Impact of Oil Industry on Adriatic Island of Krk.
2. **Zlatina Bogdanova**, Assistant Professor, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Bulgaria.
Title: Architectural Heritage and Urban Regeneration: The Case of Creative Districts in Bulgaria.
3. **Elif Ceren Tay**, Research Assistant, Yıldız Technical University, Türkiye.
Yasemen Say Özer, Associate Professor, Yıldız Technical University, Türkiye.
Title: Mediterranean Port City Identity: The Walls of Galata and Their Spatial Impacts.

12:30-14:00 Session 3

Moderator: Utku Özer, Research Fellow, Athens Institute.

1. **Lisa Hughes**, Professor Emerita, The Colorado College, USA.
Title: Co-Starring the Aegean Sea: Greek Wedding Tourism and the Hollywood Romcom.
2. **Anahita Malek**, Head, Graduate School and Associate Professor, Buckinghamshire New University, UK.
Vikneswaran Nair, President and Professor, DISTED College, Malaysia.

<p><i>Title: Adaptable Place-Making Strategies for Urban Inclusivity: Insights for Mediterranean Cities.</i></p> <p>3. Jessica Boll, Associate Professor, Carroll University, USA. <i>Title: A Seat at the Table: Cross-Cultural Commensality in the Mediterranean.</i></p> <p>4. Marta Torres, Researcher, NOVA University Lisbon, Portugal. <i>Title: Literacy in the School Context. The Material and Immaterial Heritage of Fishing Communities in Costa Da Caparica.</i></p>

14:00-15:00 Lunch

15:00-16:30 Session 4

Moderator: Hemmat Safwat, Deputy Director, Engineering Division, Athens Institute.

1. **Serge Ruzer**, Professor (Retired), Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel.
Reuven Kiperwasser, Lecturer, Ariel University, Israel.
Aryeh Kofsky, Emeritus Professor, University of Haifa, Israel.
Title: Late Antique Jewish and Christian Mediterranean Travelogues: Religious Agendas and Greco-Roman Background.
2. **Yaffa Moskovich**, Professor, Zefat Academic College, Israel.
Title: Hybrid Religious Voluntary Civil Society Organization in Israeli Army, the Israeli Case of "The Path Upwards" Lesson Learned.
3. **Andreu Orti-Mondejar**, PhD Candidate, University of Valencia, Spain.
Title: Greece and the Idea of Empire through Catalan Literature in the Late Middle Ages (XVth Century).

20:30-22:30

Athenian Early Evening Symposium (includes in order of appearance: continuous academic discussions, dinner, wine/water, music, dance)

Tuesday 15 April 2025

09:00-11:00 Session 5

Moderator: Anahita Malek, Head, Graduate School and Associate Professor, Buckinghamshire New University, UK.

1. **Denis Bernardeau Moreau**, Professor, University of Lille, France.
Title: Soft Skills, Awareness and Reflexivity. A Study of 1st-Year Students at the University of Lille.
2. **Guadalupe Ortiz**, Professor, University of Cádiz, Spain.
Alfonso Garcia-de-Prado, Associate Professor, University of Cádiz, Spain.
Title: Leveraging Software Customization to Improve Quality of Life and Foster Self-Care among Individuals and their Caregivers.
3. **Alfonso Garcia-de-Prado**, Associate Professor, University of Cádiz, Spain.
Guadalupe Ortiz, Professor, University of Cádiz, Spain.
Title: Air Quality Enhancement and Monitoring: A Strategy for Promoting Healthy Habits and Outdoor Engagement.
4. **Ana Danic Ceko**, Associate Professor, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia.
Title: Legal Education in the Field of Environmental Law through Legal Clinics-Example of the Green Legal Clinic.
5. **Jelena Kasap**, Associate Professor, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia.
Visnja Lachner, Associate Professor, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia.
Title: Legal Transactions of Widows in the Late Medieval Statutes of the Kvarner and Dalmatian Regions.

11:00-12:30 Session 6

Moderator: Marta Torres, Researcher, NOVA University Lisbon, Portugal.

1. **Raquel Perez Estebanez**, Full Professor, Complutense University of Madrid, Spain.
Title: The Impact of ESG Factors on Performance Measures in European Businesses.
2. **Pinar Akinci Acar**, Associate Professor, Istanbul Medipol University, Türkiye.
Mujdelen Ipek Yener, Professor, Marmara University, Türkiye.
Title: The Dark Entrepreneurs of The New Generation Organizations: Foucault's Courage of Truth (Parrhesia).
3. **Pedro Fernandez Sanchez**, Associate Professor, Universidad San Pablo CEU (Madrid), Spain.
Maria del Carmen Garcia Centeno, Associate Professor, Universidad San Pablo CEU (Madrid), Spain.
Title: Long and Short-Term Economic Convergence in Southern Europe's Mediterranean Economies.

12:30-14:00 Session 7 - A Microsymposium on "Historical Plagues in the Mediterranean Context"

Moderator: Andreu Orti-Mondejar, PhD Candidate, University of Valencia, Spain.

1. **Jongkuk Nam**, Professor, Ewha Womans University, South Korea.
Title: Venice's Plague of 1575-1577 and the Medical Debate of the Disease.
2. **SangDong Lee**, Associate Professor, SungkyunKwan University, South Korea.
Title: Reconsidering the Justinian Plague from a Pathological Perspective.
3. **Myongjoo Shin**, Research Professor, Ewha Womans University, South Korea.
Title: How did Ancient Rome Respond to the Plague? - Focusing on the Introduction of Asclepius.

14:00-15:00 Lunch

15:00-18:00 Session 8

Old and New-An Educational Urban Walk

The urban walk ticket is not included as part of your registration fee. It includes transportation costs and the cost to enter the Parthenon and the other monuments on the Acropolis Hill. The urban walk tour includes the broader area of Athens. Among other sites, it includes: Zappion, Syntagma Square, Temple of Olympian Zeus, Ancient Roman Agora and on Acropolis Hill: the Propylaea, the Temple of Athena Nike, the Erechtheion, and the Parthenon. The program of the tour may be adjusted, if there is a need beyond our control. This is a private event organized by ATINER exclusively for the conference participants.

19:00-20:30

Ancient Athenian Dinner

Wednesday 16 April 2025
An Educational Visit to Selected Islands
or Nafplio & Mycenae Visit

Thursday 17 April 2025
Visiting the Oracle of Delphi
Friday 18 April 2025
Visiting the Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounion

Pinar Akinci Acar

Associate Professor, Istanbul Medipol University, Türkiye

&

Mujdelen Ipek Yener

Professor, Marmara University, Türkiye

The Dark Entrepreneurs of The New Generation Organizations: Foucault's Courage of Truth (Parrhesia)

Purpose - Technological developments and changing competitive conditions lead to the emergence of new generation businesses and led to market shares changing hands. Competitive environment of businesses while its elements are changing, traditional business-to-business competition has been replaced by competition with artificial intelligence. Competition with artificial intelligence essentially emerged from technological singularity. That is, in the future, artificial intelligence will go beyond human intelligence and cause radical changes. Elements subject to innovation are related to technology and digitalization. Therefore, the definitions of entrepreneurs of new generation businesses also differ. Entrepreneurs who change the current order and step into radical innovations can be described as fearless and bold truth-telling. Bold truth-telling entrepreneurs focus not only establishing sustainable companies in the current market and ensuring profitability, they also create a change in this entrepreneurial ecosystem. Humanity has resisted change since the past and continues to do so. Introducing innovations that will affect both companies and the social order requires entrepreneurs to take risks and display a bold truth-telling stance.

Design/methodology/approach - In this context, the aim of our research is to reveal the bold truth-telling entrepreneur typology. In this context, the sub-elements of Michael Foucault's Parrhesia philosophy (ethical relationship, courage, taking risks, openness, free speech, honesty) form the basis of the bold truth-telling entrepreneur typology. Phenomenology, a qualitative research design is used when creating the typology. Interviews of young entrepreneurs of new generation businesses operating in the space, information and communication, renewable energy, software and digital game industries, which are the subjects of our research, were used as secondary data in our study. The theoretical basis of this study is explained by the grounded theory. In the light of this theory, 53,756 words of data were analyzed using the content analysis technique from the qualitative research design with the Nvivo 12 program.

Findings - Space, information and communication, which are the subject of our research, a new generation operating in the renewable energy, software and digital gaming industries Foucault's interviews and discourses of young entrepreneurs of businesses. Dimensions of the philosophy of truth (Parrhesia) have been analyzed. Analysis of these dimensions. According to the results, bold truth-telling entrepreneurship emerges in four different types.

Originality - This research is original in itself to create a bold truth-telling entrepreneur typology. The basic assumption is that new generation businesses in the process of change and digital transformation on entrepreneurs gaining or creating a new identity in this competitive order. In this context, the bold truth-telling entrepreneur profile will explain this need and it has the dimensions to accommodate it.

Denis Bernardeau Moreau
Professor, University of Lille, France

Soft Skills, Awareness and Reflexivity: A Study of 1st-Year Students at the University of Lille

Our article presents a survey that we conducted during 2024 among students inscribed in their first year at the University of Lille. This study is the result of a partnership between the university and the national association Article 1. Funded by the Foundation Université de Lille, it aims to measure and improve students' perception of their skills and self-esteem. Five hypotheses guided our research. Firstly, students are not aware of the skills they have acquired through experiential learning. Secondly, competency repertoires are too abstract to enable them to become aware of their abilities and qualities. Thirdly, students can achieve this awareness through introspective work based on their own lived experiences, particularly with the help of digital tools. Fourthly, this reflective work based on self-assessment should help students to improve their self-confidence and self-esteem. Fifthly, this evolution should facilitate their learning processes, their choices of professional orientation and integration, and help them to build their personal and professional ethos. To answer our research hypotheses, we carried out a longitudinal study in three steps. We collected 343 self-administered questionnaires (T0) from students inscribed in various first-year trainings. We organized seven workshops for a total of 176 students (T1), then collected 71 questionnaires in third step (T2). Our results highlight at least three important points. 1. We found an overall lack of knowledge and understanding of soft skills for more than half of our student population. 2. Analysis of the questionnaire responses shows a correlation between the level of perception of soft skills and the socio-demographic background of the students (with the most vulnerable coming from working-class backgrounds). 3. At the end of the workshops, respondents' perception of soft skills and the construction of a professional ethos improved significantly.

Zlatina Bogdanova

Assistant Professor, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Bulgaria

Architectural Heritage and Urban Regeneration: The Case of Creative Districts in Bulgaria

The formation of the creative districts in Bulgaria is a result of cultural policies related to urban regeneration and valorisation of architectural heritage in the city centers. Municipalities and local associations cooperate in a common effort to preserve and renew these historic cores by developing and realizing the ideas for “Kapana” in Plovdiv, “Talyana” in Varna, “KvARTala” in Sofia. Similar initiatives are also developed in the cities of Stara Zagora, Gabrovo and Veliko Tarnovo. In relation to these urban spaces, the paper presents the main agents of change, their ideas and activities, as well as specific projects and concepts for urban development, which engage an increasingly wider community of cultural heritage connoisseurs - architects, urban planners, cultural managers, entrepreneurs and artists. The purpose of the ongoing study is to outline the state and prospects for the development of the creative districts in Bulgaria. The paper will address the following problems:

1. In what way are the concepts of "creative districts" and "cultural industries" applied in Bulgaria for the purposes of urban transformation and revitalization of abandoned places and neglected urban spaces that have significant potential for tourism development?
2. How are the cultural and historical heritage preservation initiatives carried out in an urban environment, within the so-called creative districts of Bulgaria?
3. Who are the main organizations, specialists, local authorities and institutions (museums, galleries, libraries) involved in these processes and how do they cooperate?

The research is done by the method of "multi-sited ethnography", which implies carrying out fieldwork in many different towns. This method makes it possible to trace and describe the connections and networks that connect places and people. In this way, we can understand how ideas and practices in the field of urban planning and cultural activities are transmitted and transformed as they move between different locations. Moreover, this approach offers a flexible research design to the study – it becomes adaptive and responsive to the changes

and interactions of the cultural phenomena it studies. This can include shifting focus between different locations or tracking individuals or objects as they move through different contexts. Since the beginning of the research on creative districts in 2018, it has been conducted exclusively only on the territory of Bulgaria, and for this reason it can be assumed that it falls within the so-called Anthropology at home. Another main research method is based on digital ethnography - working with internet sites and social networks, mainly Facebook, where current and up-to-date information about events, festivals and discussions within creative districts is regularly published.

Jessica Boll

Associate Professor, Carroll University, USA

A Seat at the Table: Cross-Cultural Commensality in the Mediterranean

Among the many critical functions of food is (re)negotiation of identity, as we define ourselves through what we eat and with whom we eat it. The profound political, societal, and psychological effects of commensality – sharing the table – has become a topic of interdisciplinary interest in recent decades, and in multicultural contexts such as the Mediterranean, commensal acts become even more significant. This paper will explore the notion of commensality through three unique food spaces of the Mediterranean littoral that promote social integration through ingestion: Moltivolti in Palermo, Sicily; Espai Mescladís in Barcelona, Spain; and Mezze in Lisbon, Portugal.

Signifying “many faces” in Italian, Moltivolti was founded in June 2014. The motto of the organization is *La mia terra è dove poggio i miei piedi*, “My land is where I put my feet,” advocating for all people to have the right to choose a place. Combining an international restaurant, a co-working space, and a room for small-group presentations, part of Moltivolti’s mission is to encourage Palermitanis to visit the predominantly immigrant Ballarò neighborhood. Through civic education, intercultural programming, professional development, and art exhibitions, Moltivolti aims to foster interaction between both migrants and the broader community and between migrants themselves.

Barcelona’s Espai Mescladís – a play on the Catalan word *mesclar*, meaning “to mix” – likewise integrates food service, education, and art to combat the social exclusion of minority populations. The café is part of the organization Fundació Mescladís, a multifaceted initiative that has worked to train, integrate, and connect migrants and refugees since 2005. Like Moltivolti, Espai Mescladís encourages locals and tourists alike to visit a neighborhood that is home to many immigrant families, thereby breaking down both geographic and culinary divisions through their global offerings.

In Lisbon’s strikingly multicultural Arroios neighborhood – home to nearly one hundred different nationalities – immigrants of varied backgrounds have prepared and served Middle Eastern cuisine at the restaurant Mezze since 2017. The establishment, run by a family of Syrian refugees, further gives voice and visibility to their employees by sharing their stories and photos online. Like Moltivolti and Espai Mescladís, Mezze is part of a more comprehensive foundation, Associação Pão a

Pão, that provides job training, workshops, and opportunities for cultural exchange.

In three notably diverse cities, Moltivolti, Espai Mescladís, and Mezze thus use food as a medium to promote social justice, inclusion, and cohesion. By supporting, training, and employing marginalized populations, these spaces deliberately cultivate cross-cultural commensality and turn the tables, so to speak, allowing migrants to perform the role of hosts. Such initiatives demonstrate how urban foodscapes can effect change through their menus and missions and respond to the appetite for activism of their respective communities.

Dario Borim

Chairperson/Professor, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, USA

The Implicit Historian with an Anthropological Eye in *Her Mother's Mother's Mother and Her Daughters*

Pondering the very nature of history and literature, and the gray areas in between them, this essay investigates how Maria José Silveira's first novel fosters historical consciousness. This discussion assesses the terms by which the action taking place in approximately three centuries of Portuguese colonization and the rise of colonial Brazil compels us to see and experience, fictionally, what may have been forgotten about that nation's birth and long journey into being what it is today. This discussion queries Brazil's historical trajectory through personal and national conflicts shaped under the authoritarian handling of private and public matters and under the overbearing denials of structural systems of patriarchy, racism, religious abuse, slavery, and socio-economic inequality. With her anthropological eye and her discursive tools of decoloniality, such as the use of at least one female protagonist and the point of view most often drawn from a non-white woman in literally every single chapter, Silveira becomes an implicit historian.

Ana Danic Ceko

Associate Professor, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek,
Croatia

Legal Education in the Field of Environmental Law through Legal Clinics-Example of the Green Legal Clinic

In the system of higher education, through various study programs at law faculties, clinical education and practical teaching are of exceptional importance. Clinical activity requires an interdisciplinary approach, because law today is almost impossible to observe in one direction. The role of legal clinics, which represent a platform for the application of theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of law, public administration and social work, is unavoidable. Legal clinics are, undoubtedly, the first step towards the modernization of the higher education sector, because they provide the opportunity to expand knowledge and a special integration of students who can develop in the legal profession only through a practical approach to the teaching process. They also represent a link to the labor market, contact with practice during studies, the basis for acquiring appropriate and necessary skills and competences, improvement of legal education and improvement of communication skills and teamwork. The importance of holding clinical exercises as a form of practical teaching for law students in the Republic of Croatia is significant for gaining the experience of legal knowledge that student lack. At the Faculty of Law in Osijek, there are four legal clinics established as separate independent organizational units of the faculty. The paper presents the Green Legal Clinic, as the only one of its kind at law faculties in the Republic of Croatia, through which clinical teaching in the field of environmental and nature protection is carried out. In support of this, the courses specifically dedicated to the environmental topic in the various study programs of the Faculty of Law Osijek, are also briefly presented. Given that the field of the environment is an interdisciplinary field, the importance of education in the social sciences, the field of environmental law and its specificities, environmental rights and issues, and the connection between law and the environment in the higher education system through study programs and at law faculties, is of exceptional importance. All of the above goes in the direction of the development of new legal branches, the development of new study programs, the improvement of quality, the introduction of courses that include various legal aspects of environmental protection.

Pedro Fernandez Sanchez

Associate Professor, Universidad San Pablo CEU (Madrid), Spain
&

Maria del Carmen Garcia Centeno

Associate Professor, Universidad San Pablo CEU (Madrid), Spain

Long and Short-Term Economic Convergence in Southern Europe's Mediterranean Economies

The major Mediterranean economies of Southern Europe – Italy, Greece, Spain, and Portugal – are bound by deep historical, cultural, and economic connections. Over the last two centuries, these nations have followed a remarkably similar economic trajectory: slower growth during the 19th century, leading to economic divergence from the rest of Europe, and a subsequent period of partial recovery and convergence in the second half of the 20th century. This pattern, often referred to as the "Latin development model," reflects their shared economic challenges and opportunities. This study explores the long-term convergence of these economies, with particular focus on the impact of their integration into the European Monetary Union and its role in shaping their economic alignment with the broader European region.

Alfonso Garcia-de-Prado

Associate Professor, University of Cádiz, Spain

&

Guadalupe Ortiz

Professor, University of Cádiz, Spain

Air Quality Enhancement and Monitoring: A Strategy for Promoting Healthy Habits and Outdoor Engagement

The importance of air quality control and improvement is increasingly recognized in the Mediterranean region. While this area could potentially enjoy excellent air quality due to its proximity to clean marine air, a number of detrimental factors are present. The Mediterranean basin experiences higher concentrations of particulate matter and Ozone compared to other European regions, particularly during the dry summer months as well as has unique pollution sources, since the region is affected by a combination of natural sources like Saharan dust and sea salt, as well as anthropogenic sources including traffic, industry, energy production, and biomass burning. Besides, rising temperatures and altered precipitation patterns due to climate change are expected to exacerbate air pollution, together with shipping emissions in coastal areas, since the Mediterranean Sea is a major shipping route.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of air quality monitoring stations and, to some extent, dissemination of this information to the public. However, we believe that the information provided to citizens should be contextualized according to multiple situational and personal circumstances and features. Both static personal features (age, chronic respiratory diseases, etc.) and dynamically changing features (acute and/or temporal respiratory illnesses, physical activity, diet, etc.) should be taken into account, as well as the typology of the location (e.g., a port, a park, an industrial area, a rural area). Furthermore, monitoring indoor air quality, which has not yet received sufficient attention, is also of vital importance. We frequently find office buildings, hospitals, etc., with poor indoor air quality, which could be improved with ventilation that could be adjusted based on periods of better outdoor air quality.

Furthermore, air quality information can also be used to promote healthier lifestyle habits within the general population, and within specific sectors thereof. For instance, Mediterranean populations have historically been characterized by a strong outdoor lifestyle, facilitated by the region's favorable climate. However, screen addiction, the

proliferation of large-scale, enclosed shopping centers, and indoor sports facilities have diminished outdoor activities (e.g., socializing with friends, shopping at street-side establishments, or engaging in outdoor sports), which are now frequently conducted indoors. By achieving improved air quality and broader information dissemination regarding periods of optimal air quality, we can encourage increased outdoor activity, with consequent benefits for both physical and mental health.

For all these reasons, in this communication we propose a series of measures and proposals based on advancements in Internet of Things technologies and software, designed to: 1) detect air quality in real time; 2) notify interested citizens of the air quality in their location; 3) provide tailored advice to each user based on their personal and situational features; 4) assess indoor air quality in highly populated buildings and provide a system to improve it using outdoor air; and 5) promote actions aimed at improving air quality and encouraging a greater number of outdoor activities among citizens.

Lisa Hughes

Professor Emerita, The Colorado College, USA

Co-Starring the Aegean Sea: Greek Wedding Tourism and the Hollywood Romcom

“Greece: The Land of Happy Endings” was the campaign slogan of the Greek National Tourism Board in 2006, two years before the blockbuster film version of the romantic comedy *Mamma Mia!* (Lloyd, 2008). The slogan resonates at many levels, promising fulfillment of various contemporary human desires from the bucket list vacation of a lifetime, to a seaside destination dream wedding, an enchanted honeymoon, or simply the quiet contemplation of one more impossibly beautiful sunset. All “things to do before you die.” If love can survive anywhere, we believe, it must be here, in the birthplace of Aphrodite. On another level, Greece is the land of happy endings precisely because it is the source of what has become cinematic romantic comedy.

When Homer’s Odysseus overcame the obstacles on land and sea, returned home and killed the suitors who were besieging his wife, when he fell into Penelope’s arms (queue up sentimental oldie remade by quirky alternative band): “his dear wife, clear and faithful, in his arms, longed for as the sun-warmed earth is longed for by a swimmer spent in rough water where his ship went down under Poseidon’s blows, gale winds and tons of sea,” Greece became the land of romantic happy endings for literature, stage, film, television, Instagram and TikTok.

This paper proposes to read three films set in Greece as constituting a cycle, one that came about in response to the generally acknowledged death of the romantic comedy, which critics agree to have come about soon after and as a response to the sexual revolution and the women’s movements of the 70s. These films, *Tempest* (Mazursky, 1982), *Summer Lovers* (Kleiser, 1982) and *Mamma Mia!* (2008), though often wildly different in tone have a surprisingly constant set of visuals and values: the omnipresence of the Aegean Sea, and Greek archaeology which reveals the importance of Aphrodite, Dionysos, and a wide range of mythical figures in constructing the ideals of romance and comedy. The films played a key role in the rebirth of the genre, but further, I argue, these powerful cinematic images contributed to the rise of Greece in the twenty-first century as a center of real-life romance. The “proposal-wedding-honeymoon industry” helps drive the economy, especially in the islands, and on new media sites such as Instagram and TikTok, reproduces the salient images of the films. Thus Greece as seen in new media contains the implied symbolism and literary history of the film

cycle while the wedding porn of new media feeds the desire for more Greek film settings, such as *Mamma Mia!* 2.

Jelena Kasap

Associate Professor, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek,
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&

Visnja Lachner

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Croatia

Legal Transactions of Widows in the Late Medieval Statutes of the Kvarner and Dalmatian Regions

In the research, the authors try to determine the legal position of women, widows in the oldest provisions of legal sources dating from the 12th-14th centuries from different Croatian legal regions. Referring to the legal position of women who were left without legal and economic protection after the death of their spouse, the authors note that in the earliest legal sources, widows are defined by patterns of desirable behavior, and the issue of the legal position of widows is regularly mentioned in the category of orphans or other socially vulnerable categories. Recent research conducted in the field of the Croatian legal history has mainly focused on the position of women as determined by the marriage and inheritance law; it showed the inferior position of women compared to the male gender and in particular in their assigned roles in the mediaeval society, namely as mothers, daughters, wives or widows. However, a more detailed analysis of the available resources leads to the conclusion that the authors focus mainly on the economic status of women in marriage, and after marriage, which is indicated by a considerable mediaeval need for providing care for women in economic terms.

The first part of the research concentrates on the analysis of the social and legal status of widows, especially taking into account that the legal sources dealing with the issue of the legal position of widows are dealt with in provisions on orphans, parentless children or other vulnerable social categories. This leads to the conclusion that the specific feature of legal position of widows is exhausted in the need to ensure their legal protection in mediaeval communes. Furthermore, an effort has been made to determine the status of widows as depending on the marital status, because the position of women who outlived their husbands is largely determined by the status related to property in the marital union.

In the second part of the research a comparative approach is taken as regards the provisions of the aforementioned sources when it comes to the inheritance-legal position of widows. Particular attention is paid to

the restrictions determining inferior position of women when it comes to inheritance of family property, but the authors aim at establishing whether the guaranteed distinct position of widows as *donna, madonna et commisaria* contributed to the protection of widows' economic interests, i.e. to safeguarding their existence after the death of their spouse. The results of the analysis and comparison of legal norms shall finally determine the origin of separate regulations. In this sense, archival sources, i.e. records of public notaries will also be analyzed.

As legal sources have regulated the position of widows on the border between restrictions and legal protection, the last part will determine the identity of widows in relation to women in legal reality when it comes to business, i.e. to a certain extent, in procedural activities. This is certainly an exceptional regulation, but from the point of view of this research, this regime is also important for identifying the legal position of widows in the everyday life of the communes.

Bok Hee Kim

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Heroic Features and Arete in Homer's Athletics

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the various athletics methodologies in the works of Homeros in order to develop an understanding of the social milieu and the necessity of sports related values in classical Greek culture. The two main competitive values of heroism and *arête* (the virtue of being the best a person can be) are found in the athletics works of Homeros and help us to understand the importance of virtue and honor in Greek culture.

First, analysis of Homer's works show that the types of sports, the clothes worn, and the inherent danger of these activities are directly correlated to the importance of game activity in the development of the skills and the strength needed for battle. The relationship between games and welfare is a crucial element of the classical Greek social milieu.

Secondly, specific games, such as, the funeral game show specific social values. The 'funeral' game in Iliad showed the Greek value of sharing the spoils of war and comforting the dead heroes who had fallen in battle. Receiving the prizes in the game was a method of sharing honor. The kings and noblemen in Homeric society participated in both war and sport for honor (the highest value in classical Greek culture). Other games, such as, 'Welcoming Guests' showed the social rules involved in courtesy and hospitality. While the 'courtship game' shows that the best ruler was the one who, during times of war, was clever and prominent and at the same time a good spouse. These games show many heroic features of classical Greek social life.

Finally, *arete*, the Greek virtue of reaching your highest human potential, was pursued through fair competitions. A talented person was said to have *arete*. The heroes of Homeros always did their best and tried their best to outdo other competitors. This struggle to be the best a person can be was a key social trait. Participation in athletics was a way to test and show off superior ability. In this manner, sports games in the works of Homeros illustrate the opportunities for individuals to pursue their own *arete*.

Sports and gaming activities were an important component of the lives of Homer's heroes. In Iliad, the heroes saw honor as a serious matter while in other works of Homeros, *arete*, or the desire to be the best, was a common goal. The character of a hero is shown through emphasis on fair competition, honor, pursuing superior ability, and moderate behavior. These features influenced the development of the ancient

Olympic Games. In addition they formed the mental foundation for Greek sports games. Thus, this study illustrates that the Greek desire for virtue and honor is in stark contrast to the modern emphasis on victory at any cost.

Sangdong Lee

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Reconsidering the Justinian Plague from a Pathological Perspective

This paper re-evaluates the Justinian Plague (541–750 CE) from a pathological standpoint, exploring its distinct characteristics compared to other pandemics caused by *Yersinia pestis*, such as the Black Death and the Third Pandemic. Although DNA evidence confirms *Yersinia pestis* as the cause, discrepancies in symptoms, spread, and other factors raise questions about the assumptions linking these pandemics. By reconsidering the Justinian Plague from a pathological perspective, this presentation aims to deepen our understanding of how ancient pandemics were perceived and managed.

Anahita Malek

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&

Vikneswaran Nair

President and Professor, DISTED College, Malaysia

Adaptable Place-Making Strategies for Urban Inclusivity: Insights for Mediterranean Cities

As cities face rapid urbanisation and increasingly diverse populations, fostering inclusivity in public spaces has become a critical issue in sustainable urban development (Moreno et al, 2021). This paper examines adaptable place-making strategies with the potential to transform urban areas into vibrant, inclusive, and resilient spaces. Focusing on Mediterranean cities, the study draws on insights from Penang Island, Malaysia, renowned for its innovative approaches to cultural vibrancy and social cohesion. The research investigates how these practices can be tailored to Mediterranean contexts, which share similar climatic, cultural, and urban characteristics, providing a framework for inclusive urban development across varied settings. Data collection involved qualitative methods, including 30 semi-structured interviews with urban planners, policymakers, community leaders, and cultural practitioners in Penang. Additionally, three focus groups were conducted with key stakeholders, including representatives from local businesses, non-governmental organisations, and government agencies. Observational fieldwork documented the transformation of public spaces during events such as the George Town Festival and night markets, focusing on their social and cultural impacts. The data revealed key themes of gastronomy, cultural celebrations, and participatory governance as pillars of successful place-making (Gehl, 2011; Landry, 2012; Malek and Costa, 2014).

Findings highlight how Penang's strategies promote inclusivity and social integration. Gastronomy emerged as a powerful tool for fostering inter-community dialogue, with open-air food markets and festivals transforming urban spaces into hubs of cultural exchange (Montgomery, 2007). Events such as the George Town Festival and smaller community-based cultural programmes demonstrated the potential of festivals to revitalise urban spaces and create a sense of shared belonging (Richards & Palmer, 2010). Street art, including murals and interactive installations, contributed to the reimagining of neglected urban areas, attracting a diverse audience and fostering civic pride (Zukin, 1995). Crucially,

participatory governance ensured that these initiatives were inclusive and sustainable, with collaborative networks involving government agencies, local businesses, and community organisations driving decision-making processes (Caselli et al., 2024; Healey, 2006).

When assessing the adaptability of these strategies to Mediterranean cities, key considerations included balancing cultural preservation with urban modernisation, ensuring equitable access to public spaces, and leveraging the outdoor-friendly climate for enhanced public engagement (Mariano et al., 2022). The research found that the gastronomic and cultural focus of Penang's place-making aligns with Mediterranean cities' characteristics, where food and heritage play central roles in public life (Morris, 2019). However, successful adaptation requires addressing unique local challenges, such as the integration of migrant populations, managing over-tourism, and ensuring the sustainability of cultural initiatives.

The results further demonstrate that place-making strategies rooted in participatory governance lead to better outcomes in terms of inclusivity, cultural vibrancy, and urban resilience. For example, Penang's collaborative frameworks empowered marginalised communities, ensuring their voices were heard in the planning and implementation of public space initiatives (Tuan, 1977). This approach is directly relevant to Mediterranean cities, where social integration remains a pressing concern. This study concludes that adaptable place-making strategies provide a viable pathway for enhancing inclusivity and cultural sustainability in urban settings. By adopting Penang's evidence-based practices, Mediterranean cities can foster public spaces that celebrate diversity, strengthen community bonds, and support long-term urban resilience. Future research should explore the scalability of these frameworks in diverse socio-political contexts, as well as their impact on economic and environmental sustainability.

Yaffa Moskovich

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Hybrid Religious Voluntary Civil Society Organization in Israeli Army, the Israeli Case of "The Path Upwards" Lesson Learned

Purpose: This study aims to investigate the unique cultural attributes of a particular association. The research focuses on a single case study involving a civil society organization whose activities are focused within the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). Specifically, the association under examination is a religious voluntary organization engaged in social activities within the Israeli Defense Forces. This research analyzes a religious civil society whose activities are focused within the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). The association aims to strengthen the connection between Israeli soldiers and the Jewish religion by promoting the observance of SHABBAT and other holy holidays. The central thesis of this article posits that the association exhibits hybridist features, blending familial, communal, and bureaucratic cultural elements. It combines religious values with the Zionist and nationalistic ideals of the ID.

Design: Data collection employed a qualitative approach using the case study method, with twenty in-depth ethnographic interviews conducted. The research questions guiding the study are: What are the hybrid structural characteristics of the religious association? How has this hybrid structure influenced the organizational culture?

Finding: This work will focus on the association "The Path Upwards" (pseudonym), which was founded in 2008. The association's goal is to connect soldiers to the heritage of Israel and to the basic values common to Israeli society and to enable soldiers to connect to their roots, strengthen the Jewish identity of IDF soldiers, and reinforce the spirit of combat.

The practical activity is carried out through 70 volunteer families who visit various IDF bases across the country. Together with the soldiers on-site, they observe the Sabbath, known as the "SHABBAT Project." This association is distinct and unique from other public associations: its activity is only disclosed to those involved, and its existence is kept confidential. Attempts to search for it on search engines such as Google will yield no results. "The Path Upwards" operates 'under the radar' as publicity about its existence in the media could disrupt its ongoing activities and could even lead to its complete cessation due to anti-religious factors (which are situated on the left side of the political

map in Israel). The study identifies a hybrid structure comprising community, familial, and bureaucratic features. It reveals a blend of clan and bureaucratic cultural elements within the organization, demonstrating adaptability to the ideology of the Israeli Defense Forces.

Originality: The research uncovers an innovative hybrid structure that successfully navigates bureaucratic challenges and fosters a familial atmosphere contributing to communal benefits.

Jongkuk Nam

Professor, Ewha Womans University, South Korea

Venice's Plague of 1575-1577 and the Medical Debate of the Disease

This presentation examines the medical and political responses to the plague in Venice between 1575 and 1577, particularly focusing on a critical meeting in June 1576. Conflicting medical opinions and economic interests influenced the Venetian government's approach, ultimately resulting in catastrophic consequences. The debate among Venetian and Paduan physicians over whether the epidemic was truly the plague highlights the tension between medical authority and public health policy. This case study sheds light on the complexities of managing public health crises in Renaissance Venice.

Steven Oberhelman
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Doctors and Healthcare in the Greek War of Independence

At the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence in 1821, there were about 90 university-trained diplomate physicians (επιστήμονες ιατροί) in Greece. Nearly all had studied at Western universities in countries like Austria and Italy and returned with medical licenses. However, these doctors generally did not become heavily involved in the struggle. They looked after pathological conditions of the body but did not take care of wounds and battlefield injuries. This resulted in poor medical care of the Greek fighting forces and a high mortality rate of casualties. The doctors who treated members of the Greek military (land and sea) were folk healers called πρακτικοί ιατροί (practical doctors) or εμπειρικοί ιατροί (empirical doctors). They healers were highly skilled in the realignment of dislocations and fractures, in treating wounds, and conducting minor surgical procedures. As experts in herbal medicine, they prepared drugs and ointments for battlefield wounds. Many empirical doctors belonged to medical families in which medical knowledge was passed down from generation to generation. Some were trained in schools that openly existed during the Tourkokratia, such as in Athens, Ioannina, and Mystras. In my paper, I shall discuss the role that these practical or empirical doctors played in battlefield and post-battle care. I will discuss reasons why Greek freedom fighters preferred these healers and the other rural healers who helped them: κομπογιαννίτες (itinerant folk healers), Βυκογιανοί (herbalists from northwest Greece), and γιάτρισσες (women healers who knew folk medicine). I will also discuss the medical procedures they performed, the medicines they prepared, and the ways in which they tried to overcome the absence of sanitary conditions, good drinking water, food, and medicines. These doctors had a very high death rate, as many fell in epidemics, siege warfare, wounds incurred in battle, and . However, thanks to the efforts of the physicians during the War of Independence, many benefits arose: the professionalization of pharmacies (along with the first school for pharmacists), the first military hospital, and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and its School of Medicine, which produced many diplomate physicians (επιστήμονες ιατροί) – from 80 at the end of the War to 265 in the year 1853.

Andreu Orti-Mondejar
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Greece and the Idea of Empire through Catalan Literature in the Late Middle Ages (XVth Century)

The Crown of Aragon emerged as a relevant political agent in the Mediterranean context in the late Middle Ages (XIIIth - XVth centuries). Successive monarchs of Aragon and Trastámara dynasties took advantage of the dynastic and military crisis experienced by other royal families (the Anjou in Sicily and Naples) and they also paid attention to the difficulties of other polities (Sardinian *giudicati*) to ensure their presence in the main commercial nodus connected by navigation routes. In spite of some traditional considerations, the constitutional form of the Crown of Aragon –similar to the English medieval parliamentarism– was not an unavoidable inconvenient for the Aragonese kings' strategies of conquest and political assimilation. That monarchy (imperial, federative?) was supported in a decentralized and parliamentary political structure –kingdoms of Aragon, Valence, Majorca, Sicily, Sardinia and Naples, and the Catalan Counties–, in which royal enterprises had to be bound to the nobiliary interests and to the commercial initiatives from urban elites. This way, royal projects had a big support between the political society and the Crown's creditors.

This constitutional system has been frequently considered as symptomatic of a weak royal position in comparison to other monarchical polities (France or Castile). Nevertheless, recent debates about parliamentarism in Medieval and Early Modern Europe have concluded that it was a political dynamic political strategy that increased the adaptability of kings when they had to negotiate and collect financial and human resources for their campaigns with the States joined in assemblies. The Aragonese presence in the Mediterranean scenery led to long confrontations with the counts of Anjou –a secondary line of the Capetian French dynasty– and some Italic merchant republics such as Genoa and Pisa. That military presence reached the Balkan Peninsula along the XIVth century (1311-1390 in Athens and Neopatra) in a more symbolic than effective way, but the cultural footprint of this short political experience was deep and plenty of significance in many artistic representations of the Iberian Peninsula.

Our aim in this proposal is to analyze the image of the Byzantine Empire –mentioned sometimes as “Greek Empire” in Catalan texts– that we can find in *Curial i Güelfa* (c. 1450) and *Tirant lo Blanc* (c. 1460). The two novels sum up the zenith of the Catalan narrative in a century

considered by scholars as a cultural “Golden Age”. For this reason, we would like to read them from a political point of view, so we can enrich our considerations about the idea of Empire and the royal power in the political culture of the Mediterranean polities observing their representation in the literary discourses. In the end, it is an opportunity to rejoin the common notions of a distant political culture along the always stimulating transition from late Middle Ages to Early Modern Times. This proposal also intends to extend the geographical focus of the doctoral research that we are developing about connections between history of political thought and literary fiction in this historical period.

Guadalupe Ortiz

Professor, University of Cádiz, Spain

&

Alfonso Garcia-de-Prado

Associate Professor, University of Cádiz, Spain

Leveraging Software Customization to Improve Quality of Life and Foster Self-Care among Individuals and their Caregivers

The phenomenon of elderly people living alone is a growing concern in many parts of the world, including the Mediterranean region. There are several demographic trends which contribute to such an increase. We have to bear in mind that there has been a significant enlarge in life expectancy that, even though it is a positive development, results in a larger population of older adults. Concurrently, there has been a clear decrease in question of number of births, as well as evolving family structures and shifting social norms, contributing to smaller family sizes and therefore reducing the availability of potential caregivers. Furthermore, the movement of younger generations to urban centers can leave older adults behind in rural or suburban areas, thereby increasing their likelihood of living alone. Finally, gender disparities in life expectancy, with women in the Mediterranean region typically living longer than men, lead to a greater proportion of elderly women residing alone.

The increasing number of elderly individuals living alone in the Mediterranean region presents a significant public health challenge. Living alone has a number of obvious consequences, for example, a fall or an accident may not be noticed by anyone and make it impossible to give help to that person. But social isolation and loneliness also have many other serious consequences. For example, social isolation often leads to mental or cognitive illnesses, such as depression or anxiety, and can accelerate the process of dementia. Besides, it also negatively impacts physical health: less physical activity and less motivation to go outdoors, which may lead to a higher likelihood of increasing the risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke, a weakened immune system, and functional decline. Access to healthcare services can also be compromised, particularly for those persons with mobility issues or residing in remote areas. Eating habits may also be affected by social isolation, as the person may lose interest in eating or be unable to prepare healthy dishes, which can lead to nutritional deficiencies.

Most proposed systems in the scope of ambient assisted living for individuals living alone address only a subset of affected functionalities (e.g., fall detection, loneliness mitigation, or dietary monitoring); however, we posit that correlating information from diverse aspects of an individual's life, as well as their environment, can enhance their quality of life and that of their caregivers, while simultaneously reducing public healthcare costs. Consequently, we propose a series of measures and proposals based on advancements in Internet of Things and software, focused on: 1) empowering greater independence for individuals living alone; 2) personalizing the use and configuration of monitoring systems based on individual features; 3) raising awareness of the benefits of utilizing these systems and engaging individuals in self-care; 4) facilitating care provision by family members or other caregivers, as well as enabling them to maintain awareness of the individual's status from multiple perspectives (e.g., performed activities, diet, medication intake, social interactions, etc.).

Gregory T. Papanikos
President, Athens Institute

Is the Thucydides Trap Relevant to the Rise and Fall of the Ottoman Empire? A Cliometric Analysis

One of the most complex issues in history is explaining how great powers emerge and, eventually, how they decline and disappear. The first written explanation of the rise and fall of great empires was offered by the "Father of History," Herodotus, in the 5th century BCE. Among many other topics, he sought to explain the rise and fall of the great powers of his time, such as the Persian Empire, the Median Empire, the Egyptian Kingdoms, and others. His main thesis attributed the rise and fall of these great powers to individual charisma and divine intervention and fate. Thucydides, writing later in the same century, offered a different perspective. He emphasized material conditions and the dynamics of relative power: as one power emerges, it challenges the established great power. War is highly probable unless the established power yields to the demands of the emerging power. This situation has come to be known as the Thucydides Trap, a concept revisited in this century to describe the alleged antagonism between the emerging power of China and the established power of the United States. I apply this theory of rising and falling great powers to the Ottoman Empire, which emerged in the 13th century and was dissolved in the early 20th century, primarily due to its economic and military competition with the emerging power of England after the 15th century. I adopt a cliometric approach, relying on available quantitative data to test the theory. Specifically, I examine the territorial extent of the Ottoman Empire and the GDP per capita of England to quantify the level of their greatness during this 600-year period. The evidence suggests that the Ottoman Empire reached its peak just before the First Industrial Revolution, which occurred in Europe, primarily in England, in the mid-18th century. Thereafter, the empire began to decline, and by the end of the Second Industrial Revolution in 1912 and World War I in 1918, the Ottoman Empire had effectively dissolved, eventually being replaced by Türkiye in 1923.

Raquel Perez Estebanez

Full Professor, Complutense University of Madrid, Spain

The Impact of ESG Factors on Performance Measures in European Businesses

This research proposal seeks to delve into the intricate relationship between performance indicators and sustainability metrics within the realm of corporate entities. As businesses grapple with the imperative of sustainable practices, understanding how traditional performance metrics intersect with sustainability indicators becomes paramount. This study endeavours to unravel the dynamics of this relationship, aiming to illuminate ways in which these two sets of metrics can be harmoniously integrated to offer a comprehensive evaluation of a company's success while considering its environmental and societal impact.

The integration of performance measures and sustainability metrics has become a focal point in contemporary business literature as companies strive to balance economic success with environmental and social responsibility. Performance indicators traditionally focus on financial metrics such as return on assets, return on equity and profitability. Sustainability metrics, on the other hand, encompass environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors. The challenge lies in aligning these diverse metrics for a comprehensive assessment.

Researches indicate a growing trend among corporations to incorporate sustainability metrics into their performance evaluations. However, challenges persist, with companies often struggling to integrate non-financial indicators seamlessly. The works of GRI (Global Reporting Initiative) and SASB (Sustainability Accounting Standards Board) propose frameworks for harmonizing financial and sustainability reporting. These frameworks emphasize the need for companies to disclose material sustainability information alongside traditional financial metrics.

Several studies suggest that integrating sustainability metrics positively influences decision-making. Companies considering sustainability factors in decision-making exhibit improved long-term performance and risk management. Other researches highlight the increasing importance of sustainability metrics in shaping stakeholder perceptions. Investors, in particular, are placing greater emphasis on companies' environmental and social performance when making investment decisions. Industry-specific studies underscore the need for customized approaches to integration due to sector-specific challenges

and opportunities. This suggests that a one-size-fits-all solution may not be applicable across diverse industries.

While progress is evident, challenges persist, necessitating further research to refine integration frameworks, address industry-specific nuances, and assess the long-term impact on organizational performance and societal contributions.

Ivana Podnar

Assistant Professor, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Transformation of Island Iconography under the Influence of Industrial Architecture – Impact of Oil Industry on Adriatic Island of Krk

The focus of the research is the analysis of urban transformation due to the development of industrial architecture on Adriatic island of Krk. The industrialization of the islands often took place in close dialogue with the traditional production of fish farming and processing or shipbuilding, but at the same time, typologically completely different forms of industrialization of the island appear, which import completely new contents, such as oil production. The facilities required for such a form of industry bring not only unfamiliar visuals, but also open longer and more complex identification processes within the island community. On the island of Krk, the oil processing industry played a transformative role, not only the transformation of the island's landscape, but also its symbolic capital. Due to the development of industry, the urban landscape changed significantly, and industrial architecture often became an important element of the symbolic representation of the entire island.

The analysis of Omišalj on the island of Krk will show the complexity of the process of constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing urban iconography. In looking at the phenomenon, we studied images that are consciously created in order to shape the identity of a place tailored to the expectations of others (postcards, tourist materials), media images (verbal and graphic) that reflect the specificity of social and political reality, and artistic images (paintings) that represent a poetic, highly subjective view of the landscape, city and people. The analysis will also include verbal images that represent visions of development conceived by different positions of government (state and local bodies), which strategically direct development by creating a framework for the transformation of the place (both planning and financial).

Serge Ruzer

Retiree, Teaching Fellow, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

Reuven Kiperwasser

Lecturer, Ariel University, Israel

&

Aryeh Kofsky

Emeritus Professor, University of Haifa, Israel

Late Antique Jewish and Christian Mediterranean Travelogues: Religious Agendas and Greco-Roman Background

Having inherited the *topos* of sea travel from classical Greco-Roman culture, the rabbis and Christian authors of Late Antiquity sent out sailing the Mediterranean Sea not poets but rather their own coreligionists, men in possession of distinctive qualities. For rabbis, these often took the form of a proper Jewish education and a quest for deeper learning; for Christian writers, exceptional piety and religious devotion. The narrators' purpose in taking their protagonists through those dangerous trips was mostly to achieve an edifying goal, though the reality the encounters en route could well take an unexpected and astounding turn. This paper discusses a number of telling examples, where the motifs of wondrous sea adventures, reflecting broader culture mores, are reworked and adjusted to the authors' particular religious outlooks – either Jewish or Christian. The discussion aims at both highlighting the polemical strategies invoked and unearthing elements of shared pagan backdrop.

Myongjoo Shin

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**How did Ancient Rome Respond to the Plague? -
Focusing on the Introduction of Asclepius**

This presentation examines ancient Rome's responses to plagues, emphasizing the interplay between religion and public health. In a society with limited medical knowledge, Romans often turned to the gods in times of epidemics. The state's religious responses included temple dedications and rituals such as the lectisternium. The most significant intervention was the introduction of Asclepius, the god of healing, to Rome in 291 BCE, which underscored the close relationship between religion and medicine. Asclepius's temple on Tiber Island became a crucial center for health, reflecting the Roman state's approach to safeguarding public health through divine intervention.

Elif Ceren Tay

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&

Yasemen Say Özer

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Mediterranean Port City Identity: The Walls of Galata and Their Spatial Impacts

Galata is situated at the entrance of the northern shoreline of the Golden Horn which is located southwest of the Bosphorus. It lies between a hill at an elevation of 42 meters and the coastline. The region has developed as a port settlement since antiquity. After the establishment of a Genoese colony in 1267, it became a significant transit hub in the trade network between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, evolving into a dynamic commercial center. Due to its geographical location and strategic advantages, the region maintained its identity as a port city throughout history, preserving this characteristic until the 1980s. City walls encircled Galata, highlighting its strategic military and commercial significance. The walls were constructed parallel to the shoreline and adapted to the region's natural topography. The Galata Walls served both a defensive function and as a framework for managing the city's commercial activity.

Similar to other port cities, Galata linked its piers and harbors to its streets through city gates. These connections enabled the incorporation of port areas into the city via the walls. Each gate opening to the Golden Horn was linked to the adjacent harbors. Located behind the piers were commercial edifices, storage facilities, and inns. The streets surrounding the city gates were areas of intense commercial activity. In this context, the Galata city gates and walls functioned not just as a protective mechanism but also as channels for economic transactions. However, in the 1950s, urban expansion projects in Istanbul profoundly affected the historical character of Galata. The expropriation of the walls and gates resulted in the demolition of building blocks and the creation of broad thoroughfares. Following the 1980s, influenced by global neoliberal policies, a process of "deindustrialization" commenced, resulting in the relocation of Istanbul's port and shipyards from Galata. During this period, industrial buildings adjacent to the walls and gates were dismantled. This alteration broke the spatial continuity of Galata's port character. Urban interventions along the Galata shoreline since 2011 have highlighted the effects of prior demolitions on the area's spatial

coherence. The construction of the Haliç Metro Bridge damaged the remaining vestiges of the Galata Walls and gates.

The objective of the study is to analyze the trade-related functions of the walls and gates in Galata, which gained its identity as a medieval Mediterranean city under the influence of Genoese commerce, through historical maps and on-site observations, and to elucidate the significance of these elements in the city's formation. The research adopts an urban morphology-centered perspective. The impact of the walls and gates on urban morphology will be examined through changes in urban blocks and street patterns during key periods of reconstruction activities in Galata. This assessment will reveal the dual role of the region's walls and gates in defense and the organization of trade routes. In this context, the impact of the walls and gates on urban morphology will enhance comprehension of the region's historical structure. Furthermore, it explains the alterations of the city walls, which hold significant value in the collective heritage of Mediterranean port cities, in contemporary urban form examining the framework historical and spatial dimensions.

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**Literacy in the School Context:
The Material and Immaterial Heritage of Fishing
Communities in Costa Da Caparica**

In the context of the Ocean Literacy Observatory, hereinafter referred to as OLO, working with fishing communities in the region of Almada - on the south bank of the Tagus River in Greater Lisbon / Portugal - a post-doctoral study was carried out with the aim of valuing the informal knowledge of students from the Costa da Caparica fishing community, strongly rooted in Local Ecological Knowledge (LEC) and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEC), considering the cultural context of this community and digital education as a potential vehicle for promoting and valuing it. The focus on the target audience of this study, the student fishing community, indicated its relevance because it is considered that it is from young people and their CEL that behavioral attitudes can have the most impact on Environmental Education and Sustainability in an educational context, developing transformative attitudes. From a perspective of curricular innovation, in which sustainable development advocates a paradigm shift in education with the adoption of differentiated, transformative pedagogies geared towards active learning that promotes success, the aim is to create spaces for critical reflection that generate new, shared and enriched knowledge. The final products of this study co-constructed by the students and their families are (1) a Virtual Museum of Fishing Arts; (2) a local curriculum revealing ancestral knowledge and identity; (3) training courses for the school community; (4) dissemination, through digital environments, of the identification of problems related to the sustainability of the community in question. In the school context, the subject of History, its domains and specific skills, act as an aggregating pole, as well as the competences of Environmental Education. The technological skills worked on at the Museum level will be useful in two of the study's dimensions: 1 - digital literacy that promotes employability, digital citizenship, access to information, identity and socialisation, particularly for the actors involved in the various functions; 2 - technology as a contribution to sustainability and the environment. The methodology was based on a qualitative empirical study, based on Critical Ethnography, combined with Contextual Digital Ethnography. The action strategies, data collection and analysis techniques were developed in a context of participatory observation. The students and their families were critical

observers of their practices and collaborated in identifying the need to introduce themes related to Historical and Environmental Literacy and the History of Capariquense Communities and sustainable alternatives. The study and the co-constructed knowledge are publicized and disseminated by the participants - the researcher, students from the community and their families, and researchers from other disciplinary areas. The Virtual Museum has proved to be a privileged means of disseminating the cultural heritage of the fishing community. The promotion of historical, digital and environmental literacy - in this case, ocean literacy - promotes active citizenship in the area of human rights and nature, reinforcing the concept of school as a democratic and equitable space for traditional, local, technical and scientific knowledge.

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