



ATHENS INSTITUTE

Abstract Book

19th Annual International Conference on
Mediterranean Studies
30-31 March & 1-3 April 2026, Athens,
Greece

Edited by
Steven Oberhelman & Olga Gkounta

2026

Abstracts
19th Annual International
Conference on Mediterranean
Studies

30-31 March & 1-3 April
2026, Athens, Greece

Edited by Steven Oberhelman &
Olga Gkounta

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Preface

This book includes the abstracts of all the papers presented at the 19th Annual International Conference on Mediterranean Studies (30-31 March & 1-3 April 2026), 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, 2011-2026*

Year	Papers	Countries	References
2026	29	15	Oberhelman and Gkounta (2026)
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 19th Annual International Conference on Mediterranean Studies accomplished this goal by bringing together academics and scholars from 15 different countries (Albania, Austria, Canada, Croatia, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Türkiye, 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

19th Annual International Conference on Mediterranean Studies, 30-31 March & 1-3 April 2026, 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
19th Annual International Conference on Mediterranean Studies, 30-31 March & 1-3 April 2026, Athens, Greece

PROGRAM

Monday 30 March 2026

09:30-10:15

Registration

10:15-11:00

Opening Speech and Welcoming Remarks

Speaker: Gregory T. Papanikos, President, Athens Institute & Professor (Adjunct), University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA

Title of Speech: *Dynamics of Regional Security in the Mediterranean Basin* ([Paper](#)) - ([PowerPoint Presentation](#))

11:00-12:30 Session 1

Moderator: Hemmat Safwat, Deputy Director, [Engineering Division](#), Athens Institute.

1. **Helena Peric Herenda**, Full Professor, University of Zadar, Croatia.
Emma Jakovljevic, MS Oec., Austria.
Title: Branding and Advertising in the Mediterranean Area.
2. **Pinar Akinci Acar**, Associate Professor and Head, Department of Human Resources Management, Istanbul Medipol University, Türkiye.
Ahmed Affes, MBA Student, Istanbul Medipol University, Türkiye.
Title: Exploring Operational Excellence through Lean Tools: An Evaluation within a BPO Company.
3. **Domenico Emiliano**, PhD Candidate, University of Bari Aldo Moro, Italy.
Title: Youth Policies as Drivers for Urban Regeneration and Social Innovation in the Mediterranean Context: The Case of "Galattica" in Puglia, Italy.
4. **Jose Manuel Castillo Lopez**, Full Professor, University of Granada, Spain.
Title: Socioeconomic Impact of Metallic Mining in Mediterranean Europe: The Case of Andalusia.

12:30-14:00 Session 2

Moderator: Pinar Akinci Acar, Associate Professor and Head, Department of Human Resources Management, Istanbul Medipol University, Türkiye.

1. **Merce Viladrich**, Professor, University of Barcelona, Spain.
Anass Benmokhtar, Researcher, University of Barcelona, Spain.
Title: The Letter of the Hafsid Chancellery of Tunis to Peter the Ceremonious (1350): An Example of the Autographic 'alama of the Hajib Ibn Tafrajn and of the Handwriting of the Historian Ibn Khaldun.
2. **Tanja Sakota**, Associate Professor, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.
Title: Echoes from Stone: Engaging with Autoethnography, Active Embodiment and Mythical Residue in the Cave of the Nympholept near Vari, Greece.
3. **Luis Sousa**, Researcher, CHAM – Centro de Humanidades, Portugal.
Title: A European Military City in Late Sixteenth Century Morocco.
4. **Firas Alawneh**, Professor, The Hashemite University, Jordan.
Title: Physical Deterioration Mechanisms of Limestone Masonry at Qusair Amra, Jordan: Causes, Impacts, and Toward Sustainable Conservation.

14:00-14:30 Lunch

14:30-15:30 Session 3

Moderator: Elina Gugliuzzo, Associate Professor, Pegaso Telematic University, Italy.

1. **Elvia Giudice**, Associate Professor, University of Catania, Italy.
Giada Giudice, Fellow, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany.
Title: The Myth of Io and Argos between Society and Tragedy.
2. **Kathleen Ann O'Donnell**, Independent Researcher, British School at Athens, Greece.
Title: An Obsession with Ossian. The Trials and Tribulations of Research 1992-2022.

15:30-17:00 Session 4

Moderator: Tanja Sakota, Associate Professor, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.

1. **Yoshihiko Ito**, Associate Professor, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Japan.
Title: Between Continuity and Pause: Late Antique and Early Medieval Churches in Sardinia.
2. **Kazu Tsukamoto**, Graduate Student, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Japan.
Title: Diversity of Mediterranean Architectural Culture in the High Middle Ages – Crossing Towers in the Romanesque Architecture of the Northeastern Iberian Peninsula.

17:00-18:30 Session 5

Moderator: Domenico Emiliano, PhD Candidate, University of Bari Aldo Moro, Italy.

1. **Angela Busacca**, Professor, Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria, Italy.
Title: AI for Fisheries and Aquaculture Competitiveness and Sustainability.
2. **Roberto Saija**, Associate Professor, San Raffaele University of Rome, Italy.
Salvatore Lopreiato, Assistant Professor, Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria, Italy.
Title: Governing the Sea: EU Fisheries Law, Corporate due Diligence and the Future of Sustainable Enterprises.
3. **Elena Siclari**, Research Fellow, Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria, Italy.
Title: Environmental Philosophy, Fishing and the Ethics of Resource Exploitation.

18:30-20:30 Session 6 – A Special Event on “Revolutions of National Independence and the Birth of the Nation-State during the 18th and 19th Centuries”

Moderator: Lampros Ap. Pyrgiotis, Editor-in-Chief, Athenian Academic Periodical.

1. **Obrillant Damus**, Professor, State University of Haiti, Haiti & Visiting Professor, University of Sherbrooke, Canada.
Title: Towards an Analysis of Haiti's Contribution to Greek Independence in Terms of Regenerative and Restorative Pedagogy, as well as Global Citizenship Education.
2. **Pedro Ricardo Fonseca**, Professor, Guarda Polytechnic University & Researcher, University of Coimbra, Portugal.
Title: From Reconquista to Revolution: The Long Path of Portugal's Nation-State.
3. **Raquel de Caria Patrício**, Associate Professor, University of Lisbon, Portugal.
Title: The Transfer of the Portuguese Court to Brazil, Independence, and the Construction of the Brazilian Nation-State.
4. **Stefano Maggi**, Professor and Chairman, University of Siena, Italy.
Title: Italian National Unification and the Railways (1848-1861).
5. **Gregory T. Papanikos**, President, Athens Institute & Professor (Adjunct), University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA.
Title: The Long Run Trend in Sovereign State Proliferation: Evidence from 1820 to 2020.

(Paper)

20:30-22:30 **An Ancient Athenian Symposium: Continuous Dialogues, Timeless Flavors** (featuring authentic ancient Athenian dishes, local wine, and sweet delicacies from ancient Athens)

Tuesday 31 March 2026

09:00-11:00 Session 7

Moderator: Gabriele Gien, President, Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany.

1. **Daniel Marinho**, Professor, University of Beira Interior/CIDESD, Portugal.
Diogo Marques, Assistant Professor, University of Beira Interior/CIDESD, Portugal.
Henrique Neiva, Associate Professor, University of Beira Interior/CIDESD, Portugal.
Mário Marques, Professor, University of Beira Interior/CIDESD, Portugal.
Title: The Impact of Different Resistance Training Volumes on Physical Frailty in Institutionalized Older Adults – Preliminary Findings of the TrackFrailty Project.
2. **Giada Cascino**, Researcher, Kore University of Enna, Italy.
Sergio Severino, Full Professor, Kore University of Enna, Italy.
Title: Multi-Ethnic Social Integration: A Nominal and Operational Definition.
3. **Carla Podda**, PhD Student, University of Palermo/University of Cagliari, Italy.
Title: Working for Citizenship and Inclusion in Secondary School. Practices of Active Learning and Methodological Innovation.

11:00-12:30 Session 8

Moderator: Olga Gkounta, Researcher, Athens Institute.

1. **Stamatina Kousidi**, Associate Professor, Politecnico di Milano, Italy.
Title: Landscapes of the Intimate: A Critical Reconstruction of the Greek Pavilion at the XIX Triennale di Milano.
2. **Elina Gugliuzzo**, Associate Professor, Pegaso Telematic University, Italy.
Title: Climate, Epidemics and Culture in Mediterranean Modern World.
3. **Essica Marks**, Professor, Zefat Academic College, Israel.
Title: Cultural Identity and Byzantine Chant in a Small Choir of a Greek Orthodox Church.

12:30-14:00 Session 9

Moderator: Luis Sousa, Researcher, CHAM – Centro de Humanidades, Portugal.

1. **Ciro Settecasesi**, PhD Student, MED.E.A. – Higher Education Institution for Mediterranean, Europe and Africa, Italy.
Title: The International Relations between Malta and Europe.
2. **Rawan Althunyan**, Assistant Professor, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, Saudi Arabia.
Title: Beyond Private and Public: Gendered Spaces and the Reimagining of Community in Contemporary Saudi Fiction.
3. **Pranvera Kraja**, Head, Department of Teaching, University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi”, Albania.
Elda Pashuku, Master’s Student, University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi”, Albania.

Denada Marku, Master's Student, University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania.
Fabjola Bushi, Master's Student, University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania.
Title: Financial Education of Children in Primary and Lower Secondary Education: Parents' Perceptions and Students' Experiences in the Albanian Context.

14:00-14:30 Lunch

14:30-17:30 Session 10
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.

20:30-22:30

Athenian Early Evening Symposium (Sequence of Events: Ongoing Academic Discussions, Dinner, Wine and Water, Music, Dance)

Wednesday 1 April 2026
An Educational Visit to Selected Islands
Nafplio & Mycenae Visit

Thursday 2 April 2026
Visiting the Oracle of Delphi

Friday 3 April 2026
Cape Sounion Visit

Pinar Akinci Acar

Associate Professor and Head, Department of Human Resources
Management, Istanbul Medipol University, Türkiye

&

Ahmed Affes

MBA Student, Istanbul Medipol University, Türkiye

Exploring Operational Excellence through Lean Tools: An Evaluation within a BPO Company

This study assesses the introduction of Lean-related practices into ticket handling processes of a Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) entity from the managerial perspective. It examines the perceptions, use and sustainability of Lean tools in conditions of a service-oriented environment with high levels of operational intensity, and high levels of performance expectation. Rather than suggesting approaches to improvements, an evaluative design is used to study current practices, and managerial perceptions about the effectiveness of these practices.

A qualitative research design was adopted whereby semi-structured interviews were used with fifteen managers, supervisors and team leaders who are directly involved in the ticket handling processes. The obtained data were treated for thematic analysis and the results were concluded with description interpretation and supported by tables and figures. Findings show that Lean practices are used mainly informally and pragmatically, where Root Cause Analysis and Standard Operating Procedures are the most used tools. Participants indicated improvements in workflow clarity, operational consistency and performance monitoring. However, a number of obstacles were noted including time constraints, resistance to change, and digital system-related constraints.

The study contributes to the literature on Lean management in service operations by providing empirical evidence on the realities of practicing Lean in BPO contexts. From a managerial perspective, the findings highlight the importance of adaptation to the context and long-term managerial commitment in evaluating Lean related practices in service based organizations.

Firas Alawneh

Professor, The Hashemite University, Jordan

Physical Deterioration Mechanisms of Limestone Masonry at Qusair Amra, Jordan: Causes, Impacts, and Toward Sustainable Conservation

Qusair Amra, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in eastern Jordan, represents a distinguished example of early 8th-century Umayyad architecture renowned for its limestone masonry and exceptional fresco decorations. Despite its historical and artistic significance, the monument is increasingly threatened by progressive physical deterioration affecting its stone fabric. This study investigates the principal physical weathering mechanisms responsible for limestone decay at Qusair Amra through comprehensive field surveys, petrographic analysis, and environmental assessment.

The findings identify salt crystallization, thermal expansion and contraction, moisture ingress, and wind abrasion as the dominant factors contributing to surface pitting, cracking, scaling, and material loss. The porous microstructure of the limestone, combined with extreme diurnal temperature fluctuations characteristic of Jordan's arid climate, intensifies internal stress development and accelerates deterioration processes. Additionally, previous conservation interventions employing incompatible Portland cement mortars have exacerbated mechanical stresses and moisture retention, leading to localized structural damage.

The study emphasizes the necessity of adopting sustainable conservation strategies grounded in material compatibility, environmental control, and preventive maintenance. Recommended measures include the replacement of cement-based repairs with compatible lime mortars, enhancement of site drainage systems, systematic environmental monitoring, and strict adherence to international heritage conservation standards. By integrating diagnostic investigation with long-term preservation planning, this research contributes to a sustainable framework for safeguarding Qusair Amra and similar limestone heritage sites in arid environments.

Rawan Althunyan

Assistant Professor, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University,
Saudi Arabia

Beyond Private and Public: Gendered Spaces and the Reimagining of Community in Contemporary Saudi Fiction

This paper examines the politics of textual silence in contemporary Saudi fiction, focusing on how gendered silences function as narrative sites through which power, subjectivity, and community are negotiated. Drawing on two novels by Yousef Al-Mohaimed, *Munira's Bottle* (2004) and *Where Pigeons Don't Fly* (2009) and Badriah Albeshr's *Hend and the Soldiers* (2006), the study situates literary silence within the social transformations of the 2000s, a formative period in the evolving understanding of gender and authority in Saudi Arabia. Both novels by Al-Mohaimed employ an omniscient narrative voice punctuated by strategic first-person interventions, a formal structure that foregrounds the uneven distribution of speech and silence. *Munira's Bottle* centers on a female protagonist aspiring to become a writer, while *Where Pigeons Don't Fly* follows a male protagonist marked by rebellion and dissent. Albeshr's novel is narrated in the voice of the heroine Hend. Reading these gendered perspectives comparatively, the paper argues that silence operates not as absence but as a performative mechanism through which power is maintained, contested, or internalized. Speech emerges as a privilege aligned with authority, while silence particularly for women, is culturally constructed as a sexual marker of chastity, obedience, and moral regulation.

The analysis draws on Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's notion of epistemic violence to illuminate how silence is ideologically produced and normalized. At the same time, Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of polyphony is used to distinguish between *ideological silence* and *conscious narrative silence*, as well as between *passive* and *active* forms of silence, both of which remain deeply bound to power relations. By foregrounding silence as a gendered and narrative strategy rather than a void, the paper contributes to literary and cultural debates on voice, authority, and community formation. The paper thus aligns with Mediterranean Studies by approaching the region as a shared cultural and narrative horizon shaped by intersecting histories.

Angela Busacca

Professor, Mediterranea University of Reggio Calabria, Italy

AI for Fisheries and Aquaculture: Competitiveness and Sustainability

The use of ICT tools in fishing and aquaculture represents a development element of the so-called *Blue Economy*, which in recent years has seen significant increases in both quantitative terms (i.e., the number of EU companies using ICT tools) and qualitative terms (i.e., the accuracy of the tools and the precision of the output results), especially considering the use of artificial intelligence (AI), that can represent development factors in terms of efficiency, competitiveness, and sustainability.

Just in relation to the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, in 2022, the European Parliament Resolution “Committing to sustainable and competitive aquaculture in the EU: the way forward” explicitly mentions AI in point 40, calling on the Commission “to use digital systems and artificial intelligence to improve the traceability and sustainability of aquaculture products and to extend traceability to the feed used”. Furthermore, looking at recital no. 4 of the EU Regulation on Artificial Intelligence (so-called AI Act), although fisheries and aquaculture are not expressly mentioned, there is no doubt that they are attractive due to the “competitive advantages for businesses and the beneficial social and environmental outcomes” that the use of AI can bring about in the areas of “food security (...) training (...) environmental monitoring (...) energy and resource efficiency, conservation and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems, climate change mitigation and adaptation”.

Using remote sensing tools and underwater drones could be crucial for the massive collection and real-time analysis of data relating to the marine ecosystem and the number and distribution of fish species. At the same time, these tools can also collect data regarding routes, activities, and characteristics of ships and, more generally, vessels present at sea (possibly including vessels and/or devices not directly involved in fishing activities) that are protected and inaccessible or treatable without a valid legal basis. Monitoring and scanning underwater protected areas can certainly be beneficial for protecting biodiversity, combating so-called “off-target” fishing, and promoting more sustainable fishing practices, but they require significant investments in technological equipment and personnel training. AI tools are also used in aquaculture for a variety of purposes, including monitoring (water temperature and quality, species numbers and increases, presence of potential risks, etc.),

maintenance of farm equipment and structures, food preparation/packaging, and even analysis of market and end-consumer behaviours.

Alongside the many advantages, however, investments and associated costs pose the risk of creating and/or implementing digital inequalities, especially to the detriment of the more peripheral and economically weaker regions.

The proposed contribution, after a general overview of the main uses of ICT tools in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, also with reference to some experiences already implemented in EU countries, will focus on some relevant regulatory profiles. Particular attention is paid to issues concerning the use of AI tools, considering the AI Act and the so-called "European Data Strategy", as well as to some critical issues and risks arising from (potential) situations of digital divide/digital inequalities and the possible effects on the market.

Giada Cascino

Researcher, Kore University of Enna, Italy

&

Sergio Severino

Full Professor, Kore University of Enna, Italy

Multi-Ethnic Social Integration: A Nominal and Operational Definition

In the Mediterranean Sea, “there are [...] different humanities that come into conflict, claiming aspects of differentiation” (Giovannini, 2010). In the Italian context, the growing stabilisation and tendency towards the establishment of foreign presence represents a transformation “that has led to a rethinking [...] of the very modes of social coexistence in our country” (Cesareo, 2020, p. 28). This contribution aims to provide food for thought on the analysis of the formation of social bonds in a multi-ethnic society.

The contribution aims to present a perspective for the conceptualisation and analysis of multi-ethnic social bonds, which has seen the development of a quantitative methodology for measuring multi-ethnic social integration.

The conceptualisation perspective presented is based on the definition of integration proposed by Cesareo and Blangiardo (2009), which identifies peaceful coexistence as the optimal configuration of multi-ethnic integration and highlights its multidimensional, bidirectional and processual nature. However, the perspective presented exploits the possible margins for redefining the social dimension proposed by the authors and focuses on the possibility of empirically analysing the bidirectionality of the integration process.

The conceptual and analytical approach proposed to the social dimension goes beyond the presence or absence of contact with non-native people, also considering the unavailability and relational closure between ethnically diverse individuals. In this direction, two classic concepts of sociology have been recovered that lend themselves well to being adapted in a multi-ethnic key and used as criterion variables in the process of social integration: social capital and social distance. In particular, the proposal draws on Putnam's (2000/2004) conceptualisation of bridging social capital and, with regard to social distance, the theoretical and methodological approach of Cesareo (2007) and Bichi (2008). According to this proposal, the two concepts are suitable for representing a descriptive element (the first) and an explanatory element (the second) of the possible configurations of coexistence in a given community.

The proposed perspective of analysis and interpretation outlines possible configurations of multi-ethnic social integration through the combination of the chosen dimensions of study. Therefore, this perspective places at the basis of the peaceful coexistence described by Cesareo (2009) an inverse relationship between bridging social capital (presence) and social distance (absence). Furthermore, considering other possible combinations between the two dimensions of study, the conceptual and analytical approach arrives at the definition of three other types of multi-ethnic social integration, which it defines in terms of conflictual coexistence, ambivalent coexistence and indifferent (or silent) coexistence.

The proposed analysis and interpretation are applied in an empirical study, which aimed to measure the level of multi-ethnic social integration, in school and extracurricular contexts, of Italian students and students with non-Italian citizenship attending secondary schools in an Italian region, Sicily.

The development of a quantitative methodology to measure multi-ethnic social integration involved the preparation of a questionnaire, based on the adaptation of existing measurement tools and the construction of ad hoc batteries. The analysis process used Item Response Theory (IRT) models, estimated for the uni- and bi-dimensional measurement of multi-ethnic social integration.

Jose Manuel Castillo Lopez
Full Professor, University of Granada, Spain

Socioeconomic Impact of Metallic Mining in Mediterranean Europe: The Case of Andalusia

This paper presents a study on the basic structure and socioeconomic effects of metallic mining in Mediterranean Europe, with a particular focus on Andalusia.

It describes the main characteristics of its economic organization, including the companies directly exploiting the mineral deposits and their corporate domiciles, ownership links, employees, turnover, influence on the local economy, the use of foundations for part of their activities, added value, environmental impact, dependence on international prices... and, more generally, it outlines the Andalusian mining economic model. This model is ultimately defined by key aspects such as extractivism, dependency and marginalization, and unsustainability.

The organization of metallic mining in Western Andalusia is such that it lacks downstream processing and transformation of the extracted minerals. These minerals are mostly exported abroad immediately, resulting in very little added value remaining in Andalusia—while, conversely, the region bears the brunt of the severe environmental problems caused by mining activity. Furthermore, the ownership and management of the companies engaged in extraction are in the hands of multinationals domiciled abroad, where the profits are directed. Meanwhile, the way mining is currently structured generates significant negative local externalities, and the authorities have failed to establish the appropriate mechanisms for internalizing the social costs imposed on society by these companies.

In short, we are witnessing a form of mining extractivism in Andalusia in its most harmful version.

In the current economic and institutional context, in which we are experiencing a growing reduction in our decision-making capacity, the basic strategy for sustainable regional development in Andalusia, within a globalized environment, must be grounded in its endogenous potential. A competitive economy and a high quality of life for its citizens will make it possible to address globalization with a renewed strategic foundation, one capable of minimizing, where necessary, the possible negative effects of globalization.

Ultimately, it is an intermediate – but not sufficient – goal to increase the added value generated by Andalusian metallic mining. This value must also remain within Andalusia, feeding the internal economic

circuit, increasing local control, and, among other objectives, being distributed in a balanced and sustainable territorial manner.

Obrillant Damus

Professor, State University of Haiti, Haiti & Visiting Professor,
University of Sherbrooke, Canada

**Towards an Analysis of Haiti's Contribution to Greek
Independence in Terms of Regenerative and Restorative
Pedagogy, as well as Global Citizenship Education**

Haiti proclaimed its independence on January 1, 1804, after 13 years of bloody struggle against Napoleon Bonaparte's army (1791-1804). This glorious victory over the most powerful army in the world made Haiti the first independent black republic in a world then dominated by colonial and slave-owning powers. These powers did not hesitate to isolate the new state diplomatically and economically in order to prevent it from becoming a model for the plantation-based societies of the Caribbean and the Americas, whose economies were based on the enslavement of Africans. Despite the persecution and threats it faced from France, the colonial power at the time, Haiti decided to make the struggle for freedom and emancipation of peoples a regional and global issue. This is the main reason why it contributed to the liberation of several Latin American countries (Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru), as well as to the independence of a distant country like Greece, by responding to requests for help from revolutionaries in these different countries. Thus, Haiti participated not only in the regeneration of these countries, but also in the repair of their present, their past, and their future.

By providing assistance to these countries, and particularly to Greece, which is of interest to us here, Haiti transformed the rights of the dominant into the rights of all people, regardless of where they live or the color of their skin. If Haiti weighs heavily in the balance of universal history, it is because it is, rightly, the country that universalized human rights and citizenship. What did Haiti's aid to Greece consist of, and how can it be interpreted in terms of regenerative and restorative pedagogy and global citizenship education?

Domenico Emiliano

PhD Candidate, University of Bari Aldo Moro, Italy

Youth Policies as Drivers for Urban Regeneration and Social Innovation in the Mediterranean Context: The Case of "Galattica" in Puglia, Italy

In the contemporary Mediterranean context, marked by rapid socio-economic transformations and brain drain; it is crucial to understand how to support young people in becoming agents of change. In this regard, youth policies contribute to evolving the welfare system from a traditional protective form toward an innovative and enabling one. They play a fundamental role in providing personal and professional growth opportunities for young people who currently face increasingly significant challenges such as unemployment, social exclusion, inequalities, job insecurity, and mental health issues.

This contribution reconstructs the evolution of youth policies in the Puglia Region (Southern Italy), focusing particularly on "Galattica - Rete Giovani Puglia" as a paradigm of collaborative governance and participatory urban regeneration. Through a sociological lens, the study investigates the socio-spatial transformations of the measure, drawing from the theoretical corpus of third places and third spaces – viewed as spaces of cultural hybridity where identity, belonging, and social justice are negotiated.

The methodology adopts a mixed-methods approach based on the principles of realistic evaluation, combining focus groups with policy makers, semi-structured interviews with 9 regional youth workers, documentary analysis, and a multiple case study. This top-down logic allows for the reconstruction of strategies, challenges, and opportunities emerged during the first implementation cycle of the measure, providing a privileged perspective on governance mechanisms and implementation processes to understand "what works, for whom, in what circumstances, and why."

The Galattica policy represents the evolution of Puglia's regional urban regeneration strategies, activating 96 local "Nodes" as proximity spaces for providing information, orientation, and support, following a logic of co-design and shared governance based on the suspension of traditional institutional rules. Through the thematic mapping of 1,519 events promoted in local plans and 172 regionals program activities designed to meet identified local needs, the research categorizes five intervention clusters: economic and professional empowerment; rights

and social inclusion; civic participation and active citizenship; personal development and well-being; culture, creativity, and sustainability.

Preliminary results highlight a transformative impact, such as socio-spatial changes and youth empowerment but also reveal governance challenges. In conclusion, this research intends to contribute to the debate on collaborative governance models in public policy, highlighting how experimenting with innovative forms of co-design can generate more effective solutions for the territorial and collective needs of young people navigating the phase currently defined as "emerging adulthood."

Through a sociological reflection on the Apulian model, the study explores the transformative potential of youth policies in countering the marginalization and commodification of urban space, highlighting how investing in the human and social capital of new generations can trigger urban regeneration processes capable of responding to the contemporary challenges of youth unemployment and the crisis of democratic participation.

Pedro Ricardo Fonseca

Professor, Guarda Polytechnic University & Researcher, University of
Coimbra, Portugal

From Reconquista to Revolution: The Long Path of Portugal's Nation-State

Portugal's independence from León in 1143 was followed by gradual territorial consolidation through the Reconquista, completed in the mid-thirteenth century with the definitive conquest of the Algarve. Largely because of the ongoing territorial wars with the Moors and the neighbouring Christian kingdoms of Castile and León, the medieval monarchy developed comparatively strong central institutions, including royal law codes and a representative Cortes, which fostered administrative cohesion (José Mattoso, 1993). It was the beginning of a centralizing political tradition that has persisted, with few variations, to the present day. The maritime expansion of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was a crown-driven endeavour, linking state authority to overseas commerce and royal patronage, transforming Portugal into a global imperial power that demanded strengthened bureaucratic governance (João Marinho dos Santos, 2010). The Iberian Union (1580–1640) temporarily subordinated Portugal to the Spanish Habsburgs, provoking a nationalist sentiment that fuelled the resistance and ultimately the Restoration of 1640 under the Braganza dynasty (Oliveira Marques, 2019). The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries witnessed renewed centralisation, particularly under Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, Marquis of Pombal, whose enlightened absolutist reforms enhanced fiscal, educational, and administrative control, laying some of the foundations of the modern state (Oliveira Marques, 2019). Nevertheless, Portugal remained a dynastic and corporate monarchy, grounded in traditional estates and colonial wealth (Vítor Neto, 2001). The Napoleonic invasions (1807–1811) proved decisive. A strong nationalist sentiment emerged first in response to the French incursions and later intensified due to British dominance, especially since the royal family and the court had fled to Brazil in the wake of the first invasion. Liberal ideas circulating across the Atlantic world inspired military officers and bourgeois elites to demand constitutional reform. The Liberal Revolution of 1820 convened the Cortes and produced the Constitution of 1822, which asserted national sovereignty, the separation of powers, and representative government. Although political instability followed, with several coups and a fierce Civil War between absolutists and liberals (1828–1834), the liberal victory secured the establishment of

a constitutional monarchy (Vítor Neto, 2001). The consolidation of the nation-state was facilitated by Portugal's linguistic, cultural, and religious uniformity, alongside the absence of significant ethnic divisions (Fernando Catroga, 1985). Furthermore, Portuguese Romanticism, spearheaded by Alexandre Herculano and Almeida Garrett, was instrumental in shaping the concept of Portuguese identity by exalting the unique features of the nation's cultural heritage. By the mid-nineteenth century, Portugal had transitioned from a patrimonial absolutist kingdom to a constitutional nation-state grounded in codified law, parliamentary institutions, and the principle of national sovereignty, marking the culmination of a centuries-long process of state formation (Vítor Neto, 2001). However, at the level of the organization of power, there was a clear continuity between absolutist administrative centralization and the administrative model of the constitutional monarchy.

Elvia Giudice

Associate Professor, University of Catania, Italy

&

Giada Giudice

Fellow, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany

The Myth of Io and Argos between Society and Tragedy

The object of observation will be a calyx-krater, attributed to the Meleager Painter by John Davison Beazley, dating from around 405 BC and preserved in the collection of the Jatta Museum in Ruvo di Puglia (ancient Apulia, South Italy), where it was found in a tomb in the past century .

The subject depicted on the vase is part of the mythical story of Io and Argos and allows us to appreciate the change in this iconographic subject between the Archaic and Classical periods and the beginning of the 4th century BC. when social and cultural changes, and perhaps also a possible influence of tragedy, sparked and stimulated the change in figurative art, and the myth of Io took on more marked nuptial connotations, attenuating the aspects of violence inherent in the myth. The analysis of the krater by the Painter of Meleager will also be accompanied by a *rython* in the shape of a ram, dating from around 400 BC, also coming from Ruvo di Puglia, on which, in our opinion, it is no coincidence that the heroine is confronted by Eros.

Elina Gugliuzzo

Associate Professor, Pegaso Telematic University, Italy

Climate, Epidemics and Culture in Mediterranean Modern World

The plague, along with typhus, smallpox and other contagious diseases, is linked to the appearance of the Little Ice Age, the climate change that turned many Mediterranean fields into desert. People had nothing to eat and took up banditry, which became endemic in that century. In *The Betrothed*, by Giuseppe Manzoni, the couple, fleeing the evil Duke Don Alvaro, meet up in the Lazaretto in Milan, where those infected with the plague arrived. It was a truly horrible experience that left close to a million dead in its wake. One of the main cities that still gave life to the Mediterranean world was reduced to a provincial town. But the tragedy had only just begun. Thus, in the 1650s, the plague spread throughout the Mediterranean to bring desolation to towns and villages. When it reached Naples, the authentic Mediterranean metropolis in the 17th century, with its four and five-storey houses (the skyscrapers of the time) and its half a million inhabitants, the plague became especially destructive. In addition to killing half the population, it left indelible traces in the urban imaginary, as can be seen in the painting *The Market at Naples*, by Domenico Gargiulo, also known as Micco Spadaro. This painting tells us how the period saw the epidemic. Basically, it is the expression of the horror, which moved the following year, with the same levels among the population, and later to the northern cities such as Venice, Verona, Padua and Genoa. What the war, or the climate, or the change in trade networks had not done, the epidemic did: it created a "Mezzogiorno" from which one must escape as quickly as possible. It was a rupture between the south and the north although, to certify this, Protestant Europe had to feel the effect of the epidemic; thus, it reached Amsterdam in 1664 and London in 1665-66, with an outstanding witness: Daniel Defoe, author of the memorable *Journal of the Plague Year*.

The hermeneutical problems revealed since the Justinian Plague show that a multiperspective approach is definitely important. Today, we observe a primacy of paleogenetics over other disciplines involved in archaeological research since that is perceived as the non plus ultra of bioarcheological research due to its hyper technological nature. Nonetheless we stress how many more approaches and disciplines such as historical sources and economic data can help scientists reconstruct complex and rich phenomena such as past epidemics.

Yoshihiko Ito

Associate Professor, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Japan

Between Continuity and Pause: Late Antique and Early Medieval Churches in Sardinia

Sardinia is known for its millennial *nuraghi* and its distinctive rural landscape. Less widely recognized is the fact that the island constitutes one of the richest regions in the Western Mediterranean in terms of late antique and early medieval architecture. Numerous buildings of uncertain chronology, scattered across the island, are commonly described as “Byzantine,” on the assumption that they were constructed during the period when Sardinia was, to varying degrees, under the control of the Byzantine Empire, prior to the island’s incorporation into Pisan, Catalan, and other political spheres.

Previous studies of these distinctive churches have largely remained within the framework of Sardinian scholarship. Even Roberto Coroneo, one of the most important recent specialists on the subject, whose work sought to present the architectural culture of this period beyond the island, was only partially successful in disseminating the topic, in part due to his premature passing. The aim of this paper is to contextualize late antique and early medieval architecture in Sardinia within the broader tectonic culture of the Western Mediterranean.

The methodology adopted combines a critical reassessment of earlier scholarship with direct in situ observation, with particular attention to construction techniques, since written sources for this period are extremely scarce. The author’s previous research on early medieval architecture in the Iberian Peninsula is also incorporated as a comparative framework.

One of the most prominent features of these churches is the presence of domes. Earlier studies tended to treat them as a single, coherent group of domed buildings and to classify them as Byzantine, assuming a continuous, if indirect, lineage. In order to present Sardinian “Byzantine” architecture as a unified historical narrative, earlier, larger, and more monumental churches—such as Sant’Antioco or San Saturnino in Cagliari—have often been interpreted as prototypes influencing later and smaller buildings, such as San Giovanni in Assemini.

Closer examination, however, reveals a far more complex situation. The use of pendentives—commonly regarded as one of the defining features of Byzantine dome construction—is attested in some churches but absent in others, and in no case does it correspond to the canonical forms developed in Justinianic Constantinople. Sant’Antioco and San

Saturnino in Cagliari, for example, employ squinches, a solution that would later become widespread in both the Islamic world and Romanesque architecture. Conversely, other churches feature small domes set over square bays without the clear use of either pendentives or squinches.

In order to interpret and contextualize these buildings within the cultural landscape between Roman and Romanesque architecture, and between eastern and western traditions, this paper proposes situating them within a broader geographical and chronological framework. Comparison with later examples from the Iberian Peninsula illustrates a fundamental characteristic of architectural culture: unlike political transformations or military events, it operates at a slower pace. These Sardinian churches thus testify to a long-term subculture marked by continuity, inertia, and moments of suspension rather than abrupt rupture.

Stamatina Kousidi

Associate Professor, Politecnico di Milano, Italy

Landscapes of the Intimate: A Critical Reconstruction of the Greek Pavilion at the XIX Triennale di Milano

The paper examines the themes, content, perception, and legacy of the Greek participation in the XIX Triennale di Milano (1996) dedicated to the overarching theme “Identity and Differences. Integration and Plurality in the Forms of our Time. Culture between Ephemeral and Enduring” (28 February - 10 May 1996), curated by Pietro Derossi. The exhibition “Landscapes of the Intimate - New Social Spaces and the Resistance of Tradition,” curated by Yorgos Simeoforidis in collaboration with Constantinos Patestos and Yannis Aesopos - beyond offering a critical interpretation of a specific architectural stance - aimed “to explore certain landscapes of gradations of intimacy that constitute the greatest peculiarity.”

The notion of “intimacy” was here sought in the articulation of the domestic space, in the continuities, tensions and ruptures between interior and exterior realms, as well as in the integration of architecture with the public space. The exhibition presented thirty-six built and projected works of postwar Greek architecture, through drawings, video projections, photographs, and models, organized into four thematic cores: the domestication of the landscape, the interstitial void, urban gradations/passages, and the internalization of public space. Together, these categories delineated an interpretative framework that linked architecture’s formal vocabulary to issues of cultural identity, urban transformation, and social interaction.

The concept of “intimate space” intersects, on the one hand, with Critical Regionalism which sought to shape forms of dwelling that imbue architecture with a deeper experiential significance through the relationship between building and the specificities of place. On the other, it reflects the broader concerns of those days regarding the relational dimension of architecture - its ability to mediate, both in concretely and symbolically, between built and natural environments, individual and community, architectural and urban scales. Within this interpretative framework, the paper focuses particularly on the third thematic section, addressing the integration of the void into the built structure as a compositional device whose implications extend beyond material boundaries, functioning as a medium for generating new forms of spatiality and social intimacy in the urban context. It explores how the projects on display revealed distinct approaches to this integration and

to the notion of intimacy at large. In addition, it interrogates how each demonstrates how architectural idioms of modernity intersect with the vernacular tradition, with a particular resonance for the Mediterranean context.

Intimacy, understood as the capacity of physical space to foster proximity, encounter, and coexistence, emerges as a central concern in contemporary design and theoretical discourses. Situating the 1996 exhibition within a broader genealogy of exhibitions of the 1970s, '80s and '90s, such as Arthur Dexler's "Transformations in Modern Architecture" (Museum of Modern Art New York, 1979) and Paolo Portoghesi's seminal "The Presence of the Past" (Venice Architecture Biennale, 1980), may hold the key for retracing a more inclusive interpretation of postwar architecture in Greece and for reweaving thematic continuities that remain relevant in the present day, particularly with regard to the persistence of intimacy as a critical, though often understated, dimension of architectural culture.

Pranvera Kraja

Head, Department of Teaching, University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania

Elda Pashuku

Master's Student, University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania

Denada Marku

Master's Student, University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania
&

Fabjola Bushi

Master's Student, University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania

**Financial Education of Children in Primary and Lower
Secondary Education: Parents' Perceptions and Students'
Experiences in the Albanian Context**

Financial education is an essential component of an individual's personal and professional development, and its importance becomes even greater when it begins in childhood. This paper examined the perceptions of parents and students in primary and lower secondary education on children's financial education. The quantitative study design was used to present the role of the family and school in the formation of financial skills. The results, analyzed through descriptive statistics, showed a high awareness of parents on the importance of children's financial education from an early age and a strong interest of students in saving and managing money, while the role of the school was perceived to be very limited. The discussions support the primary role that the family has in children's financial education and the challenges it faces as well as the necessity of integrating this education into school curricula. Parental modeling, giving money as an educational tool, and family dialogue about needs versus wants are issues analyzed in more depth in the paper. The study's recommendations are relevant to parents, education policymakers, and curriculum developers. Through empirical evidence, this study contributes to the existing literature with evidence from a developing context, highlighting the need to strengthen school-family collaboration in developing children's and adolescents' financial literacy to create a financially responsible generation.

Stefano Maggi

Professor and Chairman, University of Siena, Italy

Italian National Unification and the Railways (1848-1861)

The process of Italian unification experienced its decisive phase between 1848 and 1861. It all began with the First War of Independence (1848), sparked by uprisings in Milan and Venice. Despite the initial enthusiasm, King Charles Albert's attempt to defeat Austria failed; however, it left behind the legacy of the "Statuto Albertino" and the realization that the Kingdom of Sardinia would serve as the heart of the national movement. In the 1850s, the key figure became the "Count of Cavour", Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sardinia. Through a sophisticated diplomatic strategy, Cavour secured the support of Napoleon III's France. This alliance led to the Second War of Independence in 1859, through which Lombardy was conquered. Subsequently, the central duchies were annexed via plebiscites. The final piece of the puzzle was the heroic "Expedition of the Thousand" (1860) led by Giuseppe Garibaldi, who liberated Southern Italy in a rapid advance. The process culminated on March 17, 1861, when the first national Parliament in Turin proclaimed the birth of the Kingdom of Italy, with Victor Emmanuel II as its first king. Fundamental territories were still missing, such as Veneto (annexed in 1866) and Rome (which became the capital only in 1871). During the Second War of Independence in 1859, the Piedmontese railways transported soldiers, supplies, and equipment. The Franco-Piedmontese army used the railway to concentrate troops, to move French soldiers and materiel from the right bank of the Po to Vercelli, to transport various supplies and siege equipment to the French troops, and to transport the wounded. Paintings show everyone on horseback, but the train was used: for example, Garibaldi entered Naples triumphantly by train. Beyond that, unification took place during a period of railway growth, which played a significant dual role, in military events and the political process. It immediately became clear that, in the process of building the new unified State, the two primary tools for ensuring cohesion were the army and the railways – the latter of which were still largely to be built across much of the peninsula. Once Italy was made, it was necessary to "make the Italians" and post-unification governments spent the majority of public works funding to connect the various territories to one another through the tracks.

Daniel Marinho

Professor, University of Beira Interior/CIDESD, Portugal

Diogo Marques

Assistant Professor, University of Beira Interior/CIDESD, Portugal

Henrique Neiva

Associate Professor, University of Beira Interior/CIDESD, Portugal

&

Mário Marques

Professor, University of Beira Interior/CIDESD, Portugal

The Impact of Different Resistance Training Volumes on Physical Frailty in Institutionalized Older Adults - Preliminary Findings of the TrackFrailty Project

Encouraging supervised exercise strategies in residential care facilities is of utmost importance to prevent and reverse the high rates of physical frailty. Given the vulnerability of these individuals, it is critical to determine the minimum strength training (ST) volume required to reverse physical frailty and improve functional performance. This study analyzed the impact of a 10-week ST cycle on the reversal of physical frailty in institutionalized older adults. This study, which is part of the TrackFrailty project (ClinicalTrials ID NCT06812286; version 2), reports the preliminary findings of the first ST cycle. In a randomized controlled trial, fifty-five institutionalized individuals, all considered physically frail or pre-frail at baseline according to the Fried frailty criteria, were randomly assigned to a less-volume (LV; n=19; 83±12 years), more-volume (MV; n=18; 85±8 years), or an active control group (CG; n=18; 85±5 years). Participants in LV and MV completed a 10-week ST cycle, which consisted of two sessions per week, eight exercises (chair squat, medicine ball throw, knee extension, shoulder press, calf raise, biceps curls, lateral raises, and chair stand plus walking), 1-2 sets per exercise of 2-5 repetitions (LV) or 1-3 sets per exercise of 6-10 repetitions (MV), and intensities progressing from 5-15% of body weight (weight vests) and 1-5 kg (dumbbells, ankle weights, and medicine balls). The LV performed approximately 1000 total repetitions, whereas the MV group completed approximately 2000. Participants in CG performed a supervised stretching routine twice per week. The primary outcome was the change in frailty criteria over 10 weeks. Secondary outcomes included changes in the Short Physical Performance Battery (SPPB), handgrip strength, medicine ball throw, and 10-m and 6-minute walking. A repeated-measures ANOVA (three groups; pre-test and post-test) was used to analyze the data. The results showed no differences between groups in

frailty status at the pre-test and post-test. The MV showed a trend towards significance in frailty status reversal (a decrease of 0.2 points; $p = 0.06$). There were no differences between groups in the secondary outcomes at the pre-test; at the post-test, only a significant difference was observed between LV and CG in SPPB scores (8.6 vs. 6.5 points; $p = 0.03$). Both LV and MV significantly increased SPPB scores ($p < 0.001$ and $p < 0.03$), handgrip strength (both $p < 0.001$), and 10-m walking ($p < 0.10$ and $p = 0.049$) after 10 weeks, while only LV also increased medicine ball throw ($p = 0.03$). Finally, CG increased handgrip strength ($p = 0.01$) and 10-m walking ($p = 0.04$). Preliminary results from the first 10-week ST cycle integrated into the TrackFrailty project showed that neither a total volume of approximately 1000 repetitions nor one of approximately 2000 repetitions was considered sufficient to reverse physical frailty in institutionalized older adults. However, both ST volumes were effective in improving physical performance outcomes in this population, with the LV group demonstrating greater efficiency (50% less volume). Future ST cycles will be important to determine the effectiveness of a low-volume approach in reversing physical frailty status in institutionalized older adults.

Essica Marks

Professor, Zefat Academic College, Israel

Cultural Identity and Byzantine Chant in a Small Choir of a Greek Orthodox Church

This paper describes the complex issue of cultural identity in a small minority that lives within a larger one, and the efforts of this small group to find its own unique culture. The study presented here suggests that music is a central element in which this small community tries to identify its culture.

The case examined here is the story of a small choir in the Greek-Orthodox church in the Arab town of Sakhnin in the Galilee. The Arab-Christians of the Greek Orthodox community in this town consists of eight hundred people out of thirty thousand Arab-Muslim citizens.

The choir discussed here was initiated sixteen years ago with the purpose of studying Byzantine liturgical chants, notation and modal system. The choir was directed by two figures: The Greek priest who taught this music and the musical director of the choir who is also the son of the former pastor of the church.

This ongoing research has found that the musical process described here is part of an attempt within this community to stress its cultural identity as Greek-Byzantine rather than their Arab-Christian identity.

The findings of this research are based on profound fieldwork that includes participant observations in the choir's weekly lessons, interviews with the Greek Priest who was the teacher of the choir, interviews with the musical director and with members of the choir.

Kathleen Ann O'Donnell

Independent Researcher, British School at Athens, Greece

An Obsession with Ossian: The Trials and Tribulations of Research 1992-2022

What triggered my passion to research into the Poems of Ossian for thirty years was the lure of the influence and connection between the 1745 Scottish revolution against English monarchy and its use as a political tool to attack English oppression in Ireland, just before the 1798 Irish Revolution, and to what extent did it influence events in the Balkans and Anatolia?

I followed up my B.A. in English Literature and Philosophy with two years of intensive summer courses in Irish Studies at Galway University in 1992. I yearned to do a Master's, which was only attainable by research, as I was living in Athens with two children. My supervisor gave me just one name written in Greek, 'Ossian in Greece by Nassos Vagenas'.

To discover the huge impact of Ossian in the then Ottoman Empire, I had to acquire a great deal of background knowledge, as Greek official records on this subject are not transparent.

The main translator of Ossian was the scholar Panayiotis Panas, born in Kephallonia, a British Protectorate, who founded the Democratic Eastern Federation in 1868 in Athens and Bucharest. He succeeded the Greek-Romanian Revolutionary, Rigas Velestinlis, the promartyr of the 1821 Greek Revolution, who had set up the anti-monarchical Eastern Confederation to unify all people of different creeds to fight the Sultan's despotism in 1780. Famous for his 'Battle Cry', he was committed to uplifting the morale of the downtrodden. He also penned a novel adapted from a French revolutionary novelist and translator of Ossian.

I attended at least fifteen conferences in America, Europe and Greece and one of my findings was published in Europe and America in 2020, which depicts how Thomas Moore, the Irish lyricist and scholar, a close friend of Lord Byron, used this Gaelic poetry and its influence in Greece.

In 1811, Lord Byron, a Greek Philhellene, translated Rigas's 'Battle Cry', as well as an adaptation of Ossian. He lived in Kephallonia shortly before his heroic demise in 1824.

When England imposed a blockade over the Don Pacifico affair on Greece in 1850, the first Ossianic translation to be published and disseminated in the Greek Press in the Balkans and Anatolia shortly afterwards was Byron's adaptation of Ossian.

It was no small feat that my arduous journey succeeded in unveiling this shrouded, unacknowledged influence of Gaelic literature by certain 19th-century Balkan radical translators, whose endeavours were largely ignored in their fight for democracy without monarchy.

Raquel de Caria Patrício

Associate Professor, University of Lisbon, Portugal

**The Transfer of the Portuguese Court to Brazil,
Independence, and the Construction of the Brazilian
Nation-State**

Brazil's independence was the historical process of political separation between the Viceroyalty of Brazil and the Kingdom of Portugal and the Algarves, which took place between 1821 and 1825, in the context of the political transformations in the Euro-Atlantic world caused by the liberal revolutions and the Napoleonic wars, and following the transfer of the Portuguese Court to Rio de Janeiro in 1808, with British assistance. Independence was achieved on 7 September 1822, when the son of the Prince Regent of Portugal, Dom João VI, Dom Pedro, proclaimed the “Cry of Ipiranga” and was acclaimed on 12 October of the same year as Dom Pedro I, the first emperor of Brazil. This triggered a war against Portugal, which recognised independence in 1825 with the signing of the Treaty of Rio de Janeiro. Regardless of the high level of interest surrounding both the diplomatic intricacies preceding the Napoleonic invasions of Portugal and the invasions themselves and their consequences for the Kingdom of Portugal and the Algarves, this paper focuses on the consequences that this journey of the Portuguese Crown had for colonial Brazil, based on two premises. On the one hand, the originality of this event: the transfer of a state to preserve a regime and a dynasty. On the other hand, the consequence of this transfer: Brazil's independence, with the subsequent creation of the national state of Brazil.

Gregory T. Papanikos

President, Athens Institute & Professor (Adjunct), University of
Tennessee, Knoxville, USA

**The Long Run Trend in Sovereign State Proliferation:
Evidence from 1820 to 2020**

This paper examines the long-run drivers of sovereign state formation using decadal global data from 1820 to 2020. Over this period the number of sovereign states rose from 36 to 195, with a pronounced acceleration during the decolonization era. I develop a parsimonious framework in which human development—captured by per-capita income, education, and human rights—reduces the costs of statehood while increasing the demand for self-determination. Using a stationary principal-component index of development (PCI) and decadal observations, I show that once development is accounted for the secular time trend in state counts becomes statistically indistinguishable from zero, while a robust post-1960 acceleration remains, consistent with the catalytic role of decolonization and shifting international norms. The findings highlight the joint importance of structural development and episodic political shocks in shaping the expansion of the international state system.

Helena Pericic Herenda

Full Professor, University of Zadar, Croatia

&

Ema Jakovljevic

Graduate Student, Austria

Branding and Advertising in the Mediterranean Area

In the marketing space as a domain of economic relations, branding is the process of creating and maintaining a separate identity for a company, product, "service" or person with the aim of building a positive perception in the market. Branding and advertising of products play a fundamental role in communication with a potential client. This communication is mainly based on language, culture and a communication channel, which means that it is possible to utilize it. Branding (designing a name, product structure, logo, jingle, slogan, colors, etc.) and advertising that are present in media such as television, radio, Internet - are predominantly achieved through three main means: verbal, audio (spoken word, music, etc.) and visual. Each of these means is largely determined by the type of consumer group (children, older people, gender-specific populations, etc.) for which the selected product is intended. The method of presentation of a branded or advertised product also depends on the space, that is the geographical location of the potential consumer, with elements of tradition, culture, language, national identity, history, etc., playing a more or less visible role, whereby specific emotional effects used to present and represent the product are selected.

The author(s) will pay special attention to the branding of some Mediterranean countries (e.g., Greece, Croatia, Italy) as the states and nations (seen from cultural aspects) and the branding of Mediterranean countries through their products (observed from economic aspects). The author(s) will study some products of the same brand in different countries (by quality, price, visual image).

The author(s) will try to focus on the the marketing of the distribution network of one famous international food/grocery chain distributor and the implementation of the policy and the promotion of diverse Mediterranean cultures through its net. The author(s) will also use an opportunity to pay attention to some stylistic forms/solutions of advertisements in the Mediterranean area.

In this interdisciplinary paper the author(s) will give a number of examples to illustrate the theses.

Carla Podda

PhD Student, University of Palermo/University of Cagliari, Italy

Working for Citizenship and Inclusion in Secondary School: Practices of Active Learning and Methodological Innovation

This contribution aims to investigate how pedagogy can provide some indications to understand the crisis of democracy and support a transformation capable of fostering the participation of citizens in the exercise of public power. This is the overarching theme of the study, which began questioning how to respond to the crisis of democracy, guaranteeing each citizen the participation in exercising power. It seems anachronistic today, considering the lack of respect for human rights, the violence, the devastation affecting our closest neighbours. First and foremost, the genocide of the Palestinians in Gaza, due to the unprecedented atrocities which is systematically perpetrated, destroys every human and moral right, leaving us dismayed and powerless. How can we act? What can we do to stop the executioners, for whom the declared goal is the destruction of the adversary, whom they present as being completely devoid of humanity? The genocide of the Palestinians needs the mobilization of the research world, which is responding unitedly to its responsibility to inform about the current situation, discuss it with the younger generations, condemn the silence of global minority, to promote participatory processes aimed at stopping this humanitarian catastrophe. International solidarity is showing its power: the support for the Global Sumud Flotilla, on the front line, must be clear. Participation has an emancipatory role: it is radical because it fills the space between those who govern and those who are governed, between those who decide and those who suffer the effects of their decisions, it presupposes a delegation of power and sovereignty and calls into question consolidated aspects of power. This reflection must be cultivated investigating the multifaceted phenomenon of citizenship, which represents an educational emergency. Education must be analysed as a category capable of emancipating towards radical forms of access to knowledge and participation. Social changes generate the crisis of democracy, adding distortions to the pre-existing imbalances: they must be read as an organic totality which have negative consequences on the way people participate in community life. Democratic and citizenship issues are interconnected with pedagogical issues and human formation. In democracy, education pursues social and individual goals, it allows the enhancement of each citizen. Everyone's experience helps

improving feelings of belonging to community and implementing participation in political life. Starting from these premises, the article explores how an international exchange program has promoted responsible and participatory citizenship skills through active methodologies. The contribution draws attention to the outcomes of the active teaching and learning experience, which involved fourteen teachers and twenty students from two Secondary Schools, the first based in Decimomannu, Italy, and the second located in *Rzeszów*, in Polinia. The purpose of the entire work was to rethink citizenship education and promote inclusion between different students, even with special educational needs, who attend these two kind of schools. The qualitative study was carried out between November 2024 and February 2025, it is based on interviews and observations conducted during informational sessions, observational activities, and operational tasks that took place during a part of the larger Erasmus Project.

Roberto Saija

Associate Professor, San Raffaele University of Rome, Italy

&

Salvatore Lopreiato

Assistant Professor, Mediterranea University of Reggio Calabria, Italy

Governing the Sea: EU Fisheries Law, Corporate due Diligence and the Future of Sustainable Enterprises

Fisheries law in the European Union has followed an evolutionary path that, from the original classification of fishery products as agricultural goods in the 1957 Treaty of Rome, has gradually acquired its own autonomy, culminating in the formal recognition provided by the Treaty of Lisbon. What was once perceived as a mere reflection of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has today become a distinct common policy, equipped with specific instruments, objectives, and rules, centred on the conservation and sustainable management of marine biological resources.

This trajectory reveals the dual nature of the discipline: on the one hand, its close proximity to agriculture in terms of food supply and market dynamics; on the other, its specificity, arising from the exhaustibility of fishery resources and the need to safeguard them for future generations. In many respects, fisheries law anticipated regulatory developments later embraced by agriculture, such as the emphasis on sustainability in its three dimensions—social, economic, and environmental. These objectives are embedded not only in Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 but also in the Common Market Organisation Regulation No 1379/2013, which constitutes an essential component of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and addresses market issues while responding to the needs of stakeholders along the supply chain.

Achieving these objectives requires the active involvement of all actors in the chain, including through the direct accountability of economic operators. This extends into an area traditionally governed by the commercial law of the Member States: the internal organisation of fisheries enterprises.

This dimension has been further reshaped by the consolidation of EU legislation on sustainability and corporate responsibility, culminating in Directive (EU) 2024/1760 on corporate sustainability due diligence (CSDDD). The Directive marks a decisive shift in managerial duties: although formally addressed to large undertakings, it obliges them to monitor sustainability across their value chains, including upstream and downstream business partners.

Through this cascading mechanism, small and medium-sized enterprises – representing the vast majority of the fisheries sector – risk bearing significant organisational compliance costs. This is particularly critical as fisheries are deemed high-impact sectors for the Directive’s sustainability objectives, especially environmental protection, which is safeguarded by mandatory provisions backed by sanctions, including of a criminal nature.

Despite the one-year postponement introduced by the omnibus package, both in terms of transposition and initial implementation, the design of sustainability-oriented organisational models remains an urgent challenge for fisheries enterprises, which cannot afford to face unprepared the epochal shift mandated by the CSDDD.

The analysis highlights how the interplay between EU fisheries law and the governance framework introduced by the CSDDD outlines an entrepreneurial system that transcends the private dimension to serve broader public interests: environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, food security, and the social and economic sustainability of coastal communities. This contribution aims to examine how fisheries entrepreneurs can structure organisational arrangements and measures that are both proportionate and effective, thereby ensuring full compliance with EU standards of sustainability and responsibility throughout the value chain.

Tanja Sakota

Associate Professor, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

**Echoes from Stone: Engaging with Autoethnography,
Active Embodiment and Mythical Residue in the Cave of
the Nympholept near Vari, Greece**

This paper explores the Cave of the Nympholept near Vari, Greece through an autoethnographic reflection, engaging with the site as a physical space, a protected archaeological location and a place of mythical significance. Drawing on embodied memory, sacred ritual and cultural resonance, the cave becomes a site of introspective inquiry – where personal narrative intersects with historical relevance and collective mythology.

Using an experiential and embodied experience, the discussion engages with the footprints of those who have walked within this historic cavity across different moments in time. The cave becomes a chamber of transformation where the self remains suspended between myth and memory, past and present, self and society. Autoethnography creates a space for critical interrogation that foregrounds the researcher's positionality and acknowledges that knowledge is situational and relational. Autoethnography also collapses the linearity of time, allowing the researcher to inhabit multiple temporalities that converge forgotten rituals with scientific enquiry and personal narrative. Drawing on the works of ancient philosophers and poets such as Hesiod and Plotinus, classical scholars like Castagnoli and Ceccarelli and autoethnographic thinkers including Adams, Ellis and Bochner, this paper starts to unravel the mysteries of the ancient past and why they remain relevant in the present.

The cave of the Nympholept is not just a site of ancient history, it is a living archive that invites the researcher to listen, remember and reposition the story of the self. The cave is a haven that holds stories about ancient symbols, myths and practices that prompt us to think about who we are and where we come from through collective narratives across time.

Ciro Settecasì

PhD Student, MED.E.A. - Higher Education Institution for
Mediterranean, Europe and Africa, Italy

The International Relations between Malta and Europe

Malta is one of the smallest countries in the world in terms of land area, and the most densely populated member state of the European Union. A foreign policy for a small island state at the trans-Mediterranean crossroads has to be fit for a highly competitive, turbulent environment. Trade and investment are essential for Malta's prosperity and quality of life. Overseas markets allow local businesses to grow to a scale that could not happen domestically. Given Malta's small market, globalisation is not an option but an inevitable necessity. Malta's foreign policy was shaped and nurtured throughout the years, in a tradition that dates much long before the country's Independence in 1964 and through the constitutional developments which have occurred since. Malta's foreign policy reflects the traditions, diversity and strengths of the nation, and contributes to the ability to assert itself globally, the peace and security it enjoys, and the fundamental rights and values which establish its democracy. Malta seeks as much as possible to resolve disputes between other countries and commits itself with humility to promote UN charter values of choosing not to be a threat to others and promoting patient negotiations, compromise and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

The Directorate-General focuses its efforts on ensuring that Malta's foreign policy objectives on bilateral and regional issues are pursued, not least through active participation in the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) as well as other fora. These efforts include the preparation of positions for interventions at the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC), the relevant Council structures, including working group meetings. The Directorate-General is sub-divided into two Directorates, one dealing with European Affairs and another with External Relations and Mediterranean Affairs.

In the regional context, active participation in the Euro-Mediterranean Process, now transformed into the Union for the Mediterranean incorporating the participation of all littoral Mediterranean States, and designed to serve as an engine for the implementation of practical projects, remains a top priority. Malta's involvement in other regional fora and initiatives of direct relevance to the Mediterranean region, namely the European Neighbourhood Policy,

the Western Mediterranean (5+5) Dialogue and the Union for the Mediterranean are likewise co-ordinated by the Directorate.

The dynamic global environment in which Maltese businesses operate presents opportunities and challenges. The transition to a low carbon global economy is gathering pace; digital connectivity is transforming commerce, and protectionism is a growing threat. All of this against the backdrop of Covid-19. The withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the EU has also compelled Malta to revisit the long-standing relations with the UK, with a view to deepen and explore new spheres of interest, especially since the two nations share close historical, economic, and social ties.

Elena Siclari

Research Fellow, Mediterranea University of Reggio Calabria, Italy
&

Daniele Cananzi

Full Professor, Mediterranea University of Reggio Calabria, Italy

Environmental Philosophy, Fishing and the Ethics of Resource Exploitation

The environmental issue is one of the most hotly debated topics on the international economic, political and social scene, and is often seen as being at odds with resource exploitation, especially with regard to fishing and fish farming. This paper aims to propose a different approach, discussing the environmental and economic issues from an ethical perspective and constructing an environmental philosophy, with a particular focus on fishing and the relationship between respect for the sea and its productivity, while taking into account the economic and political needs that structure today's society. In the Mediterranean context, the fundamental basis is constituted by European and national legislation, which, together with the environmental philosophy that we intend to develop, constitutes a fundamental regulatory element. Combining tradition and innovation is not simply a slogan or a cultural discourse; innovation and tradition are the backbone of an economic and political model that respects the most advanced economic and political theories. The Mediterranean is characterised geopolitically by its strategic position for fishing companies and beyond. Among the resources to be highlighted are particular business models linked to the specific nature of the fishing sector, which are characterised by the need to establish dialogue between both personal and family businesses and complex international corporate structures. In this regard, new technologies are an innovative field of investigation that aims to help companies achieve the principles of efficiency, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness. Discussing the environment, fishing and the exploitation of resources by building an environmental philosophy based on innovation and tradition is a difficult but stimulating undertaking, as it requires, especially in the legal-philosophical sphere, a rethinking of some fundamental institutions.

Luis Sousa

Researcher, CHAM - Centro de Humanidades, Portugal

A European Military City in Late Sixteenth Century Morocco

The presentation will focus on the military campaign which culminated in the battle Ksar el-Kebir - of the Three Kings or Oued el Makhazin -, that took on the 4th August, 1578 in the floodplain of the lower Lucus, in Northern Morocco. This was an event of global significance, as the consequences of this battle retraced not only the political map of the region, but the death of the Portuguese king Sebastian resulted in the Iberian union, thus redrawing the European political map; the joining of both overseas empires would trigger further conflict among the European powers.

This military event is probably one of the most investigated topics of modern Portuguese historiography, documented in a plethora of sources of diverse origin, periodically revisited by historians, both academic and amateur. However, little attention has been paid to fundamental aspects, without which it is not possible to accurately reconstruct the different phases of the campaign, nor to understand its outcome, namely: the organization of the march; castrametation, logistical challenges; the feeding; transportation; the reconstitution of the landscape of the territory comprised in the Arzila-Alcácer-Quibir-Larache geographic triangle, paying particular attention to its communication routes; the rigorous topographic reconstitution of the battlefield at the day (and hour) when the battle was fought.

Armies of the magnitude of those involved in the 1578 campaign, with their population of “women, children and lackeys (...) craftsmen such as carpenters, wheelers, moneylenders, healers, veterans, and all sorts of parasites”, were true itinerant military cities. The Portuguese army was the second city of the whole XVIth century, with its 20.000 plus population being only surpassed by the capital, Lisbon. Lauro Martines “moving city” concept provides a departure from the critical but strict analysis of the armed confrontation.

This presentation will focus on this mobile community. All this military and civilian personnel, along with hundreds of carts transporting ammunition and provisions, characterized the armies of the modern era. This will use recent research based on the ransomed captives of the battle (“Cities made for war: a European army in late Sixteenth-Century Morocco”, <https://moving-city.mozellosite.com/home/>), bringing a multidisciplinary study of various primary sources to

characterize the human component of the Portuguese army in its various dimensions: to identify military personnel, recruitment locations, and other specialized occupations such as artillerymen, military engineers, musicians. Adding to those “men of profession of arms” celebrated by official records, we will present those absent from almost written records: the non-combatants that provided with daily needs, which included carters, blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, bakers, and other artisans, as well as women and children and all who held the various occupations necessary to the military camp’s basic needs.

Kazu Tsukamoto

Graduate Student, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Japan

Diversity of Mediterranean Architectural Culture in the High Middle Ages - Crossing Towers in the Romanesque Architecture of the Northeastern Iberian Peninsula

In the medieval Western world, Catalonia lay between territories under Islamic rule and those under Christian control, functioning as a frontier of the Christian cultural sphere. The intensive building activity that took place there during the eleventh century has therefore often been interpreted as being shaped by architectural traditions originating in Lombardy in northern Italy. In recent years, however, this perspective has been increasingly re-examined, and greater importance has been attached to the view that Catalonia was instead grounded in the traditions and cultures of the broader Mediterranean region. Can Catalan Romanesque architecture, in light of this, continue to be discussed, as it has traditionally been, as architecture developed under the influence of Lombard Romanesque?

Against this background, this paper focuses on the cimborrio—a tower-like structure rising above the crossing—in Catalan Romanesque architecture developed between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, with the aim of clarifying its architectural individuality. Through this approach, the paper seeks to elucidate one aspect of the rich diversity found in the architecture of the Mediterranean world.

This study examines in particular two early Catalan Romanesque churches featuring cimborrios Sant Vicenç de Cardona, consecrated in 1040, and Sant Ponç de Corbera, generally considered to have been built in the mid-eleventh century. These churches have traditionally been classified as examples of Lombard Romanesque architecture, based on features such as the decorative Lombard bands on the exterior walls and barrel vaults articulated by transverse arches. However, a focus on the cimborrios at the crossings suggests that these buildings are unlikely to have been constructed by the same lineage of masons. This conclusion is drawn from a comparative analysis based on detailed observation of the external and internal forms of the cimborrios, and other details such as masonry techniques, and characteristics of domes, arches, squinches, and bell towers. These case studies reveal traces of trial and error by masons during the early phase of the formation in the cimborrio.

Through this study, Catalan cimborrios can be understood not as the product of a single technical lineage or a unified group of builders, but rather as the result of an accumulation of technical and formal solutions

that were individually selected and adjusted at each construction site. Even when influence from other regions are taken into consideration, such influence is more likely to have taken the form not of a direct transmission of construction techniques, but as a visual or conceptual imitation of completed architectural forms.

This research does not deny the influx of external cultural influences into Catalan Romanesque architecture. Instead, through a systematic and detailed analysis of cimborrios, it aims to clarify how particular elements and bodies of knowledge were combined with local traditions and subsequently assimilated. By pursuing such an approach, this study contributes to a better understanding of the continuity and rich diversity of architectural traditions across the Mediterranean region.

Merce Viladrich

Professor, University of Barcelona, Spain

&

Anass Benmokhtar

Researcher, University of Barcelona, Spain

The Letter of the Hafsid Chancellery of Tunis to Peter the Ceremonious (1350): An Example of the Autographic 'alama of the Hajib Ibn Tafrajn and of the Handwriting of the Historian Ibn Khaldun

The Archive of the Crown of Aragon (ACA) preserves around 180 Arabic documents issued throughout the Late Middle Ages by the chancelleries of some Mediterranean states (Granada, Morocco, Tlemcen, Ifriqiya and Egypt), addressed to the kings of the Catalan house, or to officials and diplomats from their surroundings. This documentary set refers to the long political, diplomatic, economic and cultural interrelation between Barcelona and the sultanates of North Africa and forms a written heritage that remains largely unexplored from the academic sphere and is practically unknown to the public. However, the documentary set has recently been registered on the UNESCO "Memory of the World Register", in recognition of its cultural value.

Among the documents, there is a letter sent by the chancellery of the Hafsid sultanate of Tunis to King Peter the Ceremonious (r. 1336-1387), dated December 8, 1350. We focus on the study of this document with the aim of resolving the enigmas it presents both in terms of the motives that could have originated it, as well as its content, and above all its authentication and its writing.

In the case of the chancelleries of the medieval Maghreb, official letters have two very striking special characteristics: the distribution of the text and the *'alama*, literally "mark", which consists of the sign or logo of the sender, and which took very different forms in the Marinid, Abdalwadid and Hafsid documentation. These two elements guaranteed the validation and authenticity of the papers. We decipher the *'alama* or signature validating the missive and establish the autographic nature of it, corresponding to the Hafsid *hajib* Ibn Tafrajn (d. 1364). We suggest the attribution of the handwriting of the rest of the letter to the historian Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406), who was appointed "chancellor" or *kitab al-'alama* of Ibn Tafrajn, at the end of 1350.

If our hypothesis were correct, we would find before us an example of the writing of the well-known Arabic historian Ibn Khaldun, adding value and interest to the strange Barcelona missive. At the same time, we

open the door to a more systematic review of the authorship of medieval documents such as chancellery letters, which were never signed by the calligraphers who wrote them, who today remain unknown and anonymous under the authority of the powers they served.

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