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ATHENS INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

A World Association of Academics and Researchers

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PRESS RELEASE

RE: 11th Annual International Conference on Mediterranean Studies, 26-29 March 2018, The Titania Hotel, 52 Panepistimiou Avenue, Athens, Greece

The [Athens Institute for Education and Research](http://www.atiner.gr) hosted its **11th Annual International Conference on Mediterranean Studies**, organized by the [Center for European & Mediterranean Affairs](http://www.atiner.gr). Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos, President, ATINER & Honorary Professor, University of Stirling, UK gave the welcoming remarks.

During the first two days of the conference, 33 scientific papers were presented by 35 academics and researchers from 13 different countries (Canada, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Portugal, Romania, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, UK and USA). The detailed conference program is available at <https://www.atiner.gr/2018/2018PRO-MDT.pdf>. The conference sessions evolved around a series of themes including history, politics, education, arts, culture and special topics.

As part of these conference sessions, various interesting historical issues were addressed. Dr. Steven Oberhelman, Professor at the Texas A&M University of USA, presented and analyzed the ethnographer and physician Edward Browne's theses on the utility of dreams' imagery as a diagnostic and prognostic tool in medicine, as deduced from works of Aristotle, Hippocrates and Galen. Dr. Oberhelman also made the connection between Browne's views and current medical theory prevalent across Europe, especially the Mediterranean world.

Dr. Peter Cowe, Narekatsi Professor of Armenian Studies at UCLA, USA, spoke of the formation of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia during the High Middle Ages by Armenian refugees fleeing the Seljuk invasion of Armenia. Dr. Cowe explored the role of royal and court sponsored translations that provided authoritative models for the construction of institutions capable of sustaining the new complexities of scale and diversity, as Armenian Cilicia transitioned from a principality to a centralized monarchy.

Dr. Luigi Mascilli Migliorini, Professor at the Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale" of Italy, referred to the challenges of teaching Mediterranean History today and the need to redefine the place of the Mediterranean, including its modern and contemporary history, within the general frame of world history. Dr. Migliorini presented the term "connected history", as a tool to help historians break this deadlock. In this concept, the whole Mediterranean space should be divided and connected to other spaces, and after having studied a "multi-space" and "multi-time" Mediterranean, it will be possible to re-connect the different Mediterranean spaces and restore the unity of Mediterranean history.

Dr. Kyong-son Kang, Professor at the Korea National Open University, South Korea, presented an interpretation of the socio-political significance of citizenship law in Athens and the Roman Empire, and argued why and how the restriction of citizenship in one case and its expansion in the case of the Roman Empire, were meant to function as a means to increase the revenue of the state finances. Dr. Kang explained that these two conflicting ways in which the citizenship was politically exploited by Athens and the Roman Empire, expressed the differences in their political and social structure.

Dr. Elina Gugliuzzo, Associate Professor at the Università degli Studi Pegaso in Italy, presented the phenomenon of renegades in the Early Modern Mediterranean world. The conversion to Islam was a common practice among Christian slaves in the Ottoman Empire, mainly for the purpose of improving their way of life. Thus it occurred not in terms of religious beliefs, but rather for social and economic reasons.

Dr. Jose Varandas, Deputy Director of the University of Lisbon in Portugal, along with Dr. Vitor Luis Gaspar Rodrigues & Dr. Luis Frederico Dias Antunes, Senior Researchers at the same University, presented issues regarding military history in the Mediterranean Area, and specifically discussed the beginning of the Portuguese conquest of North Africa (14th-15th Centuries), and the Portuguese military organization in Morocco (1640-1661), addressing the development of the last two Portuguese fortresses in Tangier and El-Jadida.

Many researchers also addressed political issues in the region. This included Dr. Moshe Maoz, Professor Emeritus at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel and expert on Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, who made a brief historic account of the conflict in Syria since March 2011, and analyzed the role of modern Great Powers in the region. He referred to the need for a well-designed political settlement and discussed the characteristics and future implications of the arrangement currently under construction between Russia, Iran and Turkey.

Dr. Jacob Abadi, Professor at the United States Air Force Academy in USA, examined the evolution of Israel's relations with Saudi Arabia since the establishment of the Jewish state in 1948, explaining how the major events in the Middle East affected Saudi Arabia's foreign policy orientation, which ranged from being basically hostile to recently improving since the emergence of the Iranian nuclear threat.

Dr. Ramazan Gözen, Professor at Marmara University in Turkey, explored the term Neo-Ottomanism in its soft and hard versions, conceptually as well as historically, and outlined its current and future implications for both Turkish national and foreign policy as well as for regional and world politics.

Dr. Veronica Martins, Senior Researcher at the CGSRS | Centre for Geopolitics & Security in Realism Studies of UK, on the occasion of the recent terrorist attacks in Europe, referred to the important role of imams in radicalization. She focused on Morocco's cooperation with certain Western African and European States in the fight against Islamic terrorism, following a "soft power" prevention strategy, mostly via imams training offered by the Mohammed VI Institute for the Training of Imams and Mourchidates in Rabat.

Apart from these major historical and political themes, the conference also addressed various special topics, such as cultural and environmental issues, arts and urban planning. Dr. Laurent Koechlin, Professor at the University of Toulouse in France, collaborated with marine biologist Dr. Denise Viale on reprocessing old data of the Argocet project (1986), which aimed to track the activity of fin-whales of the NW Mediterranean. The new findings shed light on the important role of fin-whales in the equilibrium of the Mediterranean ecosystem. Dr. Koechlin finished his presentation focusing on the importance of introducing policies and developing strategies to eliminate plastic waste, the number one threat to these animals and for the entire Mediterranean ecosystem.

Dr. Ignacio Sanfeliu Arboix, Associate Professor at the Superior School of Architecture of Barcelona of the Polytechnic University of Catalonia in Spain, stressed the importance of the construction of public space in the architecture of cities. He discussed the design of urban infrastructure, which should have as an outcome a space suitable for all without exception and a place for citizenship expression. This will reveal a new ecosystem and preserve the identity of the city. He gave various examples of squares, parks and other spaces in the city of Barcelona that serve this purpose.

Dr. Nissim Ben David, Professor at the Max Stern Yezreel Valley College in Israel presented a study to determine the optimal allocation of time among work, sports, internet use, and sleep, so that it would be possible to minimize the gap between actual and optimal time allocations. For this study, a cross-section database of 928 Israeli residents provided material for the construction of a system of simultaneous equations, the elaboration of which resulted in data concerning sixteen different demographic groups. According to the results, non-married people desired the fewest hours of sleep, whereas married desired the most. Females wished to invest the fewest hours in work. Desired internet hours were high mainly among non-married females. High desired allocations of hours for sports were observed mainly among male Jews.

Finally, the last 2 days of the Conference were dedicated to cultural activities and touring. The program included a visit to Delphi, one of the most famous historic sites in Greece, and an Educational Island Tour.

In 2018, ATINER will organize more than 100 annual international conferences and other events, on a plethora of topics, as part of the 2018 Academic Events Program. The list of the upcoming conferences is available at <https://www.atiner.gr/2018conferences>, and the list of the upcoming streams and panels is available at <https://www.atiner.gr/2018panels>. These events are organized by ATINER's seven Divisions and 37 Units and are open to all academics and researchers as stipulated in the [mission](#) and [policy](#) of the association.

ATINER was established in 1995 as an independent, world member-based association of academics and researchers. Its mission is to act as a forum where academics and researchers from all over the world can meet to exchange ideas on their research and discuss future developments in their disciplines. Athens was chosen as the meeting place because of its long history and culture. Currently, the Association has 2396 members from 115 different countries (<http://www.atiner.gr/all-members>).

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