



7<sup>th</sup>

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HISTORY

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ABSTRACTS

University of Zadar,  
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25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2026



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# Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2026

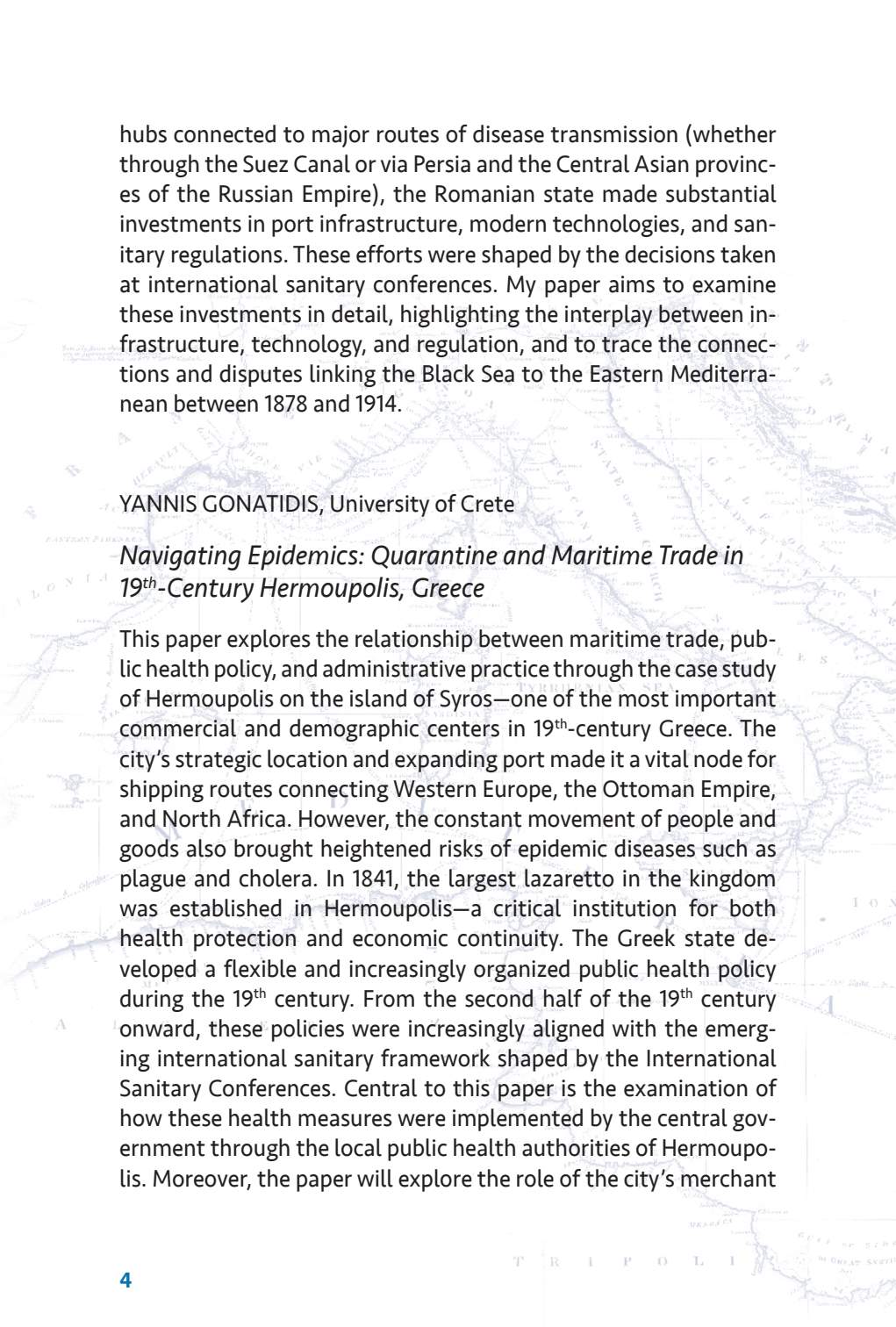
## ROOM 1

**16:00 – 18:00**    **SESSION I – Quarantine, Lazarettos, and Maritime Trade in the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Mediterranean**  
**Chair: CARMEL VASSALLO, University of Malta**

**CONSTANTIN ARDELEANU**, Institute for South-East European Studies / New Europe College

*Epidemics, trade and sanitary modernization. Romania's Maritime Gateways to the Eastern Mediterranean, 1878–1914*

In 1878, Romania acquired the province of Dobrudja, becoming a riparian state on the Black Sea. The ports of Sulina and Constanța, Romania's principal seaports, also served as the main gateways through which epidemics could spread inland. Consequently, the Romanian state concentrated much of its sanitary defense in these two locations. The ports, however, had different functions and significance. Sulina was under the control of the European Commission of the Danube, while Constanța functioned as a "national" port, closely integrated with the Romanian mainland and strongly developed through the construction of a modern harbor. Constanța also became the base of the Romanian Maritime Service, a state-funded shipping company which, beginning in 1895, introduced a regular steamship connection to Istanbul and later extended its routes to key Eastern Mediterranean ports such as Piraeus, Izmir, and Alexandria. As Sulina and Constanța emerged as busy

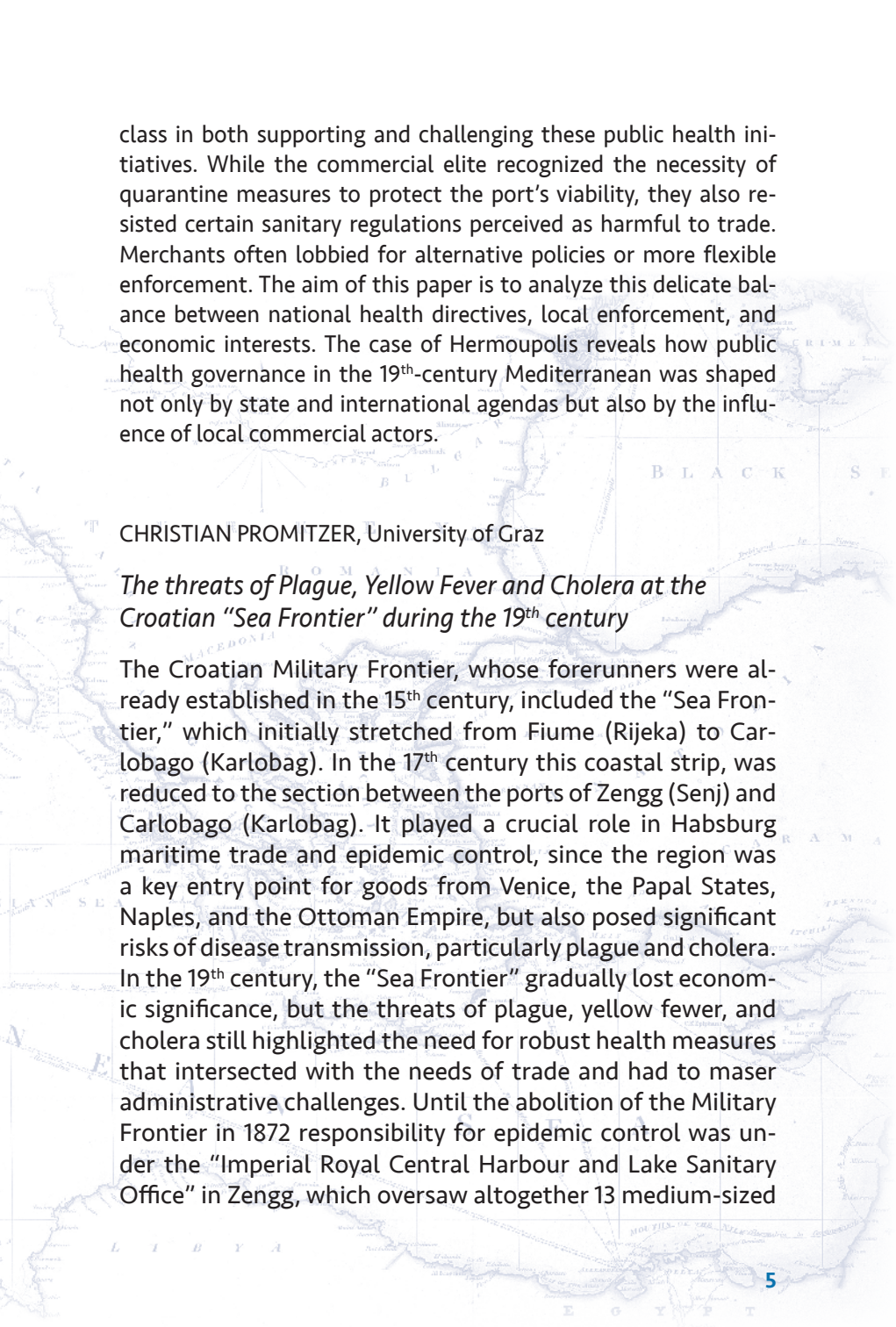


hubs connected to major routes of disease transmission (whether through the Suez Canal or via Persia and the Central Asian provinces of the Russian Empire), the Romanian state made substantial investments in port infrastructure, modern technologies, and sanitary regulations. These efforts were shaped by the decisions taken at international sanitary conferences. My paper aims to examine these investments in detail, highlighting the interplay between infrastructure, technology, and regulation, and to trace the connections and disputes linking the Black Sea to the Eastern Mediterranean between 1878 and 1914.

YANNIS GONATIDIS, University of Crete

### *Navigating Epidemics: Quarantine and Maritime Trade in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Hermoupolis, Greece*

This paper explores the relationship between maritime trade, public health policy, and administrative practice through the case study of Hermoupolis on the island of Syros—one of the most important commercial and demographic centers in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Greece. The city's strategic location and expanding port made it a vital node for shipping routes connecting Western Europe, the Ottoman Empire, and North Africa. However, the constant movement of people and goods also brought heightened risks of epidemic diseases such as plague and cholera. In 1841, the largest lazaretto in the kingdom was established in Hermoupolis—a critical institution for both health protection and economic continuity. The Greek state developed a flexible and increasingly organized public health policy during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onward, these policies were increasingly aligned with the emerging international sanitary framework shaped by the International Sanitary Conferences. Central to this paper is the examination of how these health measures were implemented by the central government through the local public health authorities of Hermoupolis. Moreover, the paper will explore the role of the city's merchant



class in both supporting and challenging these public health initiatives. While the commercial elite recognized the necessity of quarantine measures to protect the port's viability, they also resisted certain sanitary regulations perceived as harmful to trade. Merchants often lobbied for alternative policies or more flexible enforcement. The aim of this paper is to analyze this delicate balance between national health directives, local enforcement, and economic interests. The case of Hermoupolis reveals how public health governance in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Mediterranean was shaped not only by state and international agendas but also by the influence of local commercial actors.

CHRISTIAN PROMITZER, University of Graz

*The threats of Plague, Yellow Fever and Cholera at the Croatian "Sea Frontier" during the 19<sup>th</sup> century*

The Croatian Military Frontier, whose forerunners were already established in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, included the "Sea Frontier," which initially stretched from Fiume (Rijeka) to Carlobago (Karlobag). In the 17<sup>th</sup> century this coastal strip, was reduced to the section between the ports of Zengg (Senj) and Carlobago (Karlobag). It played a crucial role in Habsburg maritime trade and epidemic control, since the region was a key entry point for goods from Venice, the Papal States, Naples, and the Ottoman Empire, but also posed significant risks of disease transmission, particularly plague and cholera. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the "Sea Frontier" gradually lost economic significance, but the threats of plague, yellow fever, and cholera still highlighted the need for robust health measures that intersected with the needs of trade and had to masher administrative challenges. Until the abolition of the Military Frontier in 1872 responsibility for epidemic control was under the "Imperial Royal Central Harbour and Lake Sanitary Office" in Zengg, which oversaw altogether 13 medium-sized

and smaller ports with a about twenty sanitary officials. Measures included quarantine stations, naval hospitals, and health inspections, reflecting the growing intertwining of public health and international trade. However, disputes over the efficiency of these measures and the competence of officials persisted.

JAVIER MARTÍNEZ-ANTONIO, University of Zaragoza

### *Leaving Mogador for Tangier: Pilgrimage, Trade and Lazarettos in 19<sup>th</sup> century Morocco*

In 1903 an international commission was set up with the goal of drafting a project for a new lazaretto to be built in Cape Malabata, near Tangier. This project was the climax of long-running efforts aimed at substituting the provisional lazaretto that had been operating in Mogador Island, 500 kilometers down the Atlantic coast of Morocco, for a permanent one at the mouth of the Strait of Gibraltar. Despite substantial improvements introduced in its facilities and organization during the 1890s, the Mogador Island lazaretto had basically acted as a site of quarantine exclusively for Muslim pilgrims returning for Mecca. Mounting European imperialism demanded, instead, a new lazaretto that supported plans for a commercial expansion that should pave the way for the long-cherished colonial control of Morocco and, therefore, its maritime trade. We will examine this shift in Moroccan quarantine policies in lazarettos by using sources from French, Spanish and British archives.

## ROOM 2

**16:00 – 18:00**    **SESSION I – Practical Application of Maritime Laws and Legislation in the Mediterranean**  
Chair: VALENTINA ŠOŠTARIĆ, University of Zadar

MARIA PONTIKOU, Aegeas Non-Profit Civil Company

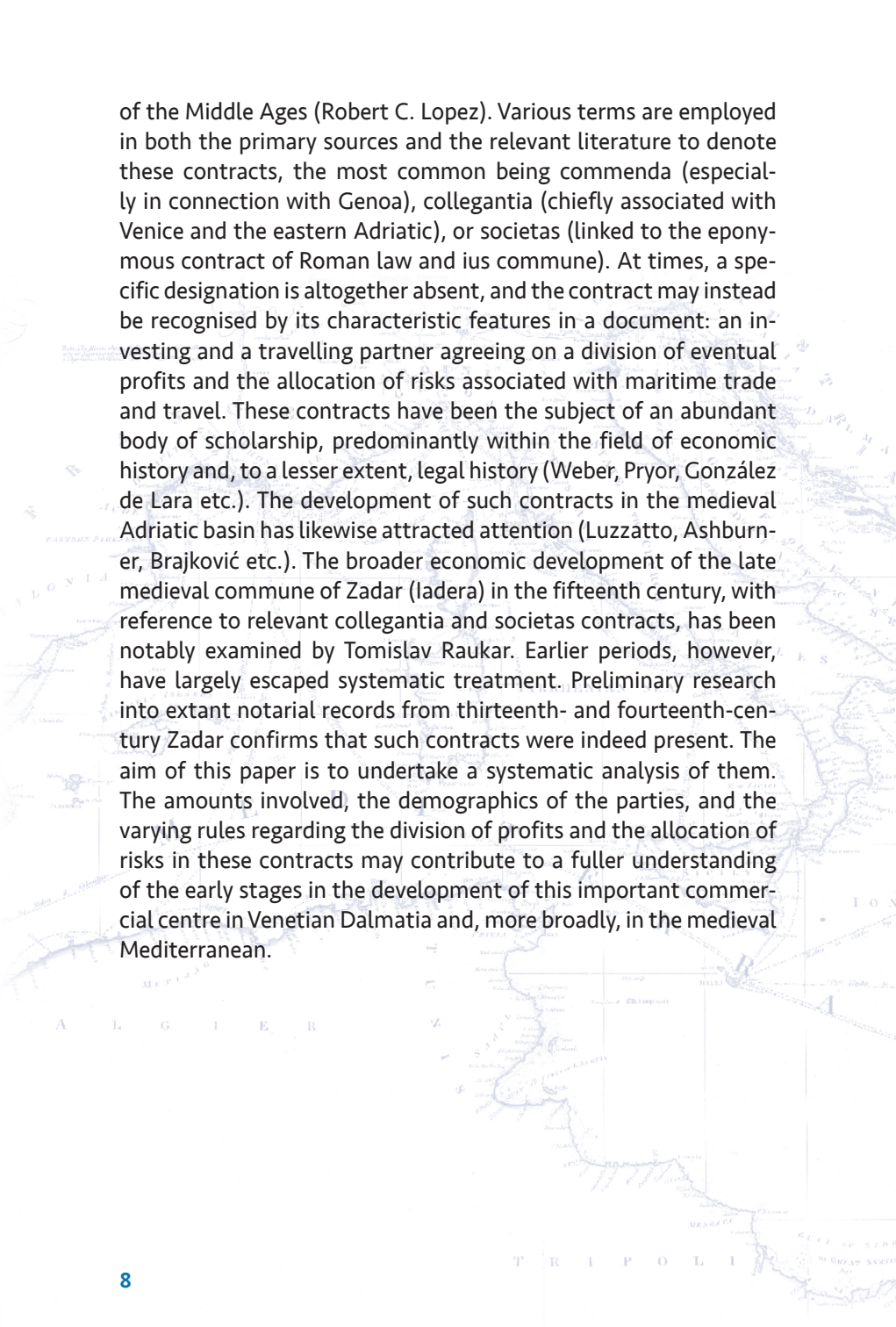
### *Legislation on Looting and Seizing Goods from Shipwrecks and Anchored Ships, 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Centuries*

From an early stage (D. 47. 9. 1., C. 6. 2. 18), the legislator showed concern for acts related to shipwrecks, particularly those involving infringements on ownership rights over goods resulting from maritime accidents. This paper will examine the relevant regulations found in the Digest, which are later reiterated in the Basilika. These regulations address the consequences of shipwrecks, including expulsion and contribution in the event of a wreck, as well as the seizure of goods from both the ship and the shipwrecked. Additionally, the legislative measures introduced by the Macedonian rulers and their successors, along with the corresponding penalties, will be discussed. Narrative sources, such as those by Michael Choniates, confirm that looting and the seizure of items from shipwrecks were relatively common practices, underscoring the imperial efforts to prevent such illegal activities.

HENRIK-RIKO HELD, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Law

### *Maritime investment contracts in Zadar in the High Middle Ages (13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century)*

Maritime investment contracts in the Mediterranean have been described as “a medieval innovation of the highest importance” that contributed significantly to the so-called Commercial Revolution



of the Middle Ages (Robert C. Lopez). Various terms are employed in both the primary sources and the relevant literature to denote these contracts, the most common being *commenda* (especially in connection with Genoa), *collegantia* (chiefly associated with Venice and the eastern Adriatic), or *societas* (linked to the eponymous contract of Roman law and *ius commune*). At times, a specific designation is altogether absent, and the contract may instead be recognised by its characteristic features in a document: an investing and a travelling partner agreeing on a division of eventual profits and the allocation of risks associated with maritime trade and travel. These contracts have been the subject of an abundant body of scholarship, predominantly within the field of economic history and, to a lesser extent, legal history (Weber, Pryor, González de Lara etc.). The development of such contracts in the medieval Adriatic basin has likewise attracted attention (Luzzatto, Ashburner, Brajković etc.). The broader economic development of the late medieval commune of Zadar (*ladera*) in the fifteenth century, with reference to relevant *collegantia* and *societas* contracts, has been notably examined by Tomislav Raukar. Earlier periods, however, have largely escaped systematic treatment. Preliminary research into extant notarial records from thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Zadar confirms that such contracts were indeed present. The aim of this paper is to undertake a systematic analysis of them. The amounts involved, the demographics of the parties, and the varying rules regarding the division of profits and the allocation of risks in these contracts may contribute to a fuller understanding of the early stages in the development of this important commercial centre in Venetian Dalmatia and, more broadly, in the medieval Mediterranean.

TOMISLAV POPIĆ, University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

### *Navigating Risk: The Average in Late Medieval Dalmatian Courts*

The legal institution of general average (varea, avarea) – a mechanism of risk management in maritime trade and compensation for damage to maritime goods caused during commercial ventures at sea – formed one of the fundamental components of medieval maritime law. Its presence on the eastern Adriatic coast is attested primarily in the statutes of coastal and island communes, directing the research towards the normative framework, and leaving its practical application largely neglected. The aim of this paper is therefore to examine the institution of general average through the records of the Zadar Commercial and Maritime Court, dating from the second half of the fourteenth and the first half of the fifteenth century. A series of legal cases illustrates the practical application of general average across diverse contexts, ranging from the apportionment of salvage costs for ship and cargo to the adjudication of liability, extending also to more complex disputes arising from overseas trade. At the same time, they shed light on the often precarious conditions under which maritime enterprises were conducted. Overall, these cases demonstrate that the core principles of general average – solidarity in risk and the proportionate distribution of loss – were upheld, while also being applied with flexibility to particular circumstances. By addressing both the normative and practical dimensions of general average, this paper seeks to offer a more nuanced understanding of late medieval Adriatic legal culture and its place within the broader legal and commercial networks of the Mediterranean.

PAU MÁRQUEZ-ANTÓN, University of Barcelona

*The ship mates formation in Barcelona: analysis of the legislative changes and its application (1850-1910)*

This paper is presented as a continuation of my first participation in the 6<sup>th</sup> Mediterranean Maritime History Network of 2024 about an analysis of the legislative changes between 1850 and 1910. The data showed is part of my doctoral dissertation and the work that I have been doing during 2024 and 2025 with the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya - Arxiu de la Biblioteca Rector Gabriel Ferraté, the archive that I have consulted. During the emptying of this archive, I collected around 2500 files of students between 1850 and 1910. Within each document, one can find: marks, where they come from, their age, and more information linked to personal aspects of their life. Thanks to the information compiled, it is possible to make a relationship among students and the legislative changes, observing how did they adapted to the promotion of new laws and the modification of the criteria for studying. Also, it is possible to see if the pupils passed their studies or not, and link that to the legislative and the subject changes. It is important to mention that the period studied revolves around the transition from sailing ships to steamships in Catalonia and Spain. Because of that, the students had to adapt themselves to new subjects related to the steamboats and its functioning. So, to sum up, this communication will be aimed to show what can one see if one crosses the information between the Reales Órdenes (Royal Decrees) and the emptying of the archive. If the documentation of the students shows evidence of the evolution of the legal aspects, either with the documentation to be delivered, the formal requirements to study or the variations in the type of student that begins the career to become a pilot.

# Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> of May 2026

## ROOM 1

9:30 – 11:30

**SESSION 1 – HolyLab 1 – Maritime Networks and the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land: Information, Piracy, and Trade (17<sup>th</sup> century)**  
**Chair: CONSTANTIN ARDELEANU, Institute for South-East European Studies / New Europe College**

MEGAN C. ARMSTRONG, McMaster University

*Reporting on the Holy Land: The Commissioners as a Spanish information Network during the Seventeenth Century*

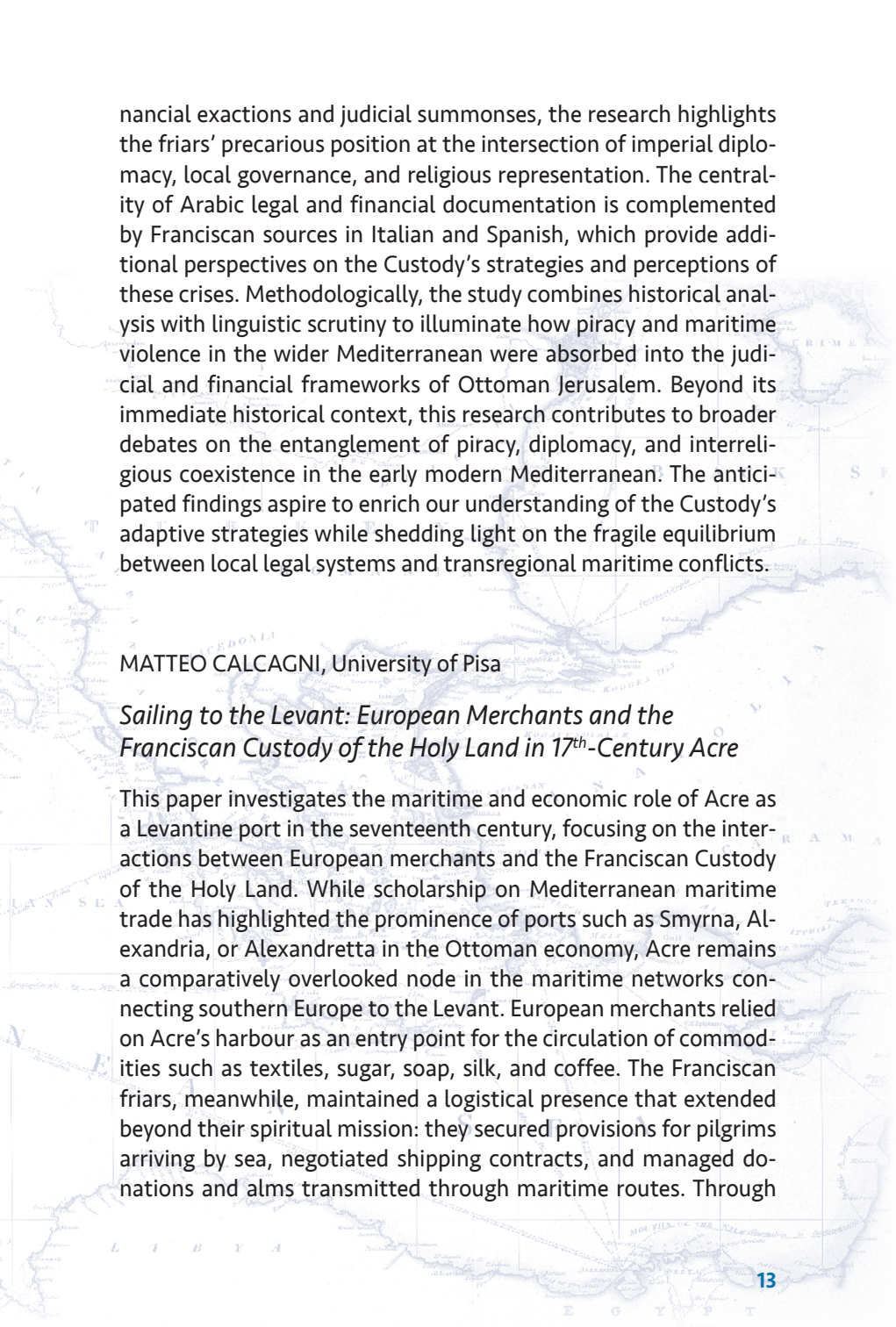
The Custody is the venerable Franciscan institution based in Jerusalem which has overseen the operations of Catholic pilgrimage since the fourteenth century. The extensive seventeenth century correspondence of the Spanish commissioners found in the National Archives in Madrid illuminates a network that functioned from the 1620s onwards as a vital spiritual, political and economic connective tissue linking the Custody, an institution operating with the boundaries of the Ottoman empire, and a globally expanding Catholic tradition. This paper explores evidence of a Spanish information network nestled within the global body of the commissioners. This paper will argue that the reporting of the commissioners

on issues involving governance, jurisdiction and the usage of alms in the Custody speak to information-gathering and alms-gathering as entwined strategies for a Spanish state intent upon fashioning itself as a great Christian leader through its patronage of the Custody. As a Franciscan information network, the Spanish friars offered Spain a valued conduit of reliable information on a Franciscan pilgrimage administration that was a site of intense competition between multiple imperial powers (French, Venetian, Ottoman). Moreover, through their membership in this administration Spanish commissioners held legal and political privileges that gave them physical access to the Holy Land, a region that lay within the boundaries of the Ottoman empire and thus outside of the direct influence of the Spanish state. It is because these friars were constantly moving to and through the Holy Land in pursuit of these responsibilities that we should also consider them local conduits as well as experts of Spanish authority.

MANUEL CAPOMACCIO, RomaTre University

*Pirates at Sea, Friars on Trial: Navigating Piracy and Diplomacy through Arabic Legal and Financial Documents in 17<sup>th</sup>-Century Jerusalem*

This study investigates the repercussions of Mediterranean corsair activity on the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land and its fraught relationship with Ottoman authorities during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. At the heart of the research lie Arabic sources: the Jerusalem Sharia Court Records (Ara. siğillāt al-maḥkamah al-šarʿiyyah li-l-Quds al-Šarīf) and the Franciscan accounting documents, likewise composed in Arabic by the Franciscan dragomans. These documents shed light on how episodes of maritime conflict between European and Ottoman vessels reverberated within Jerusalem, where Ottoman officials often held the Franciscans accountable as intermediaries or scapegoats. By tracing the occasions and modalities through which Ottoman authorities subjected the Custody to fi-

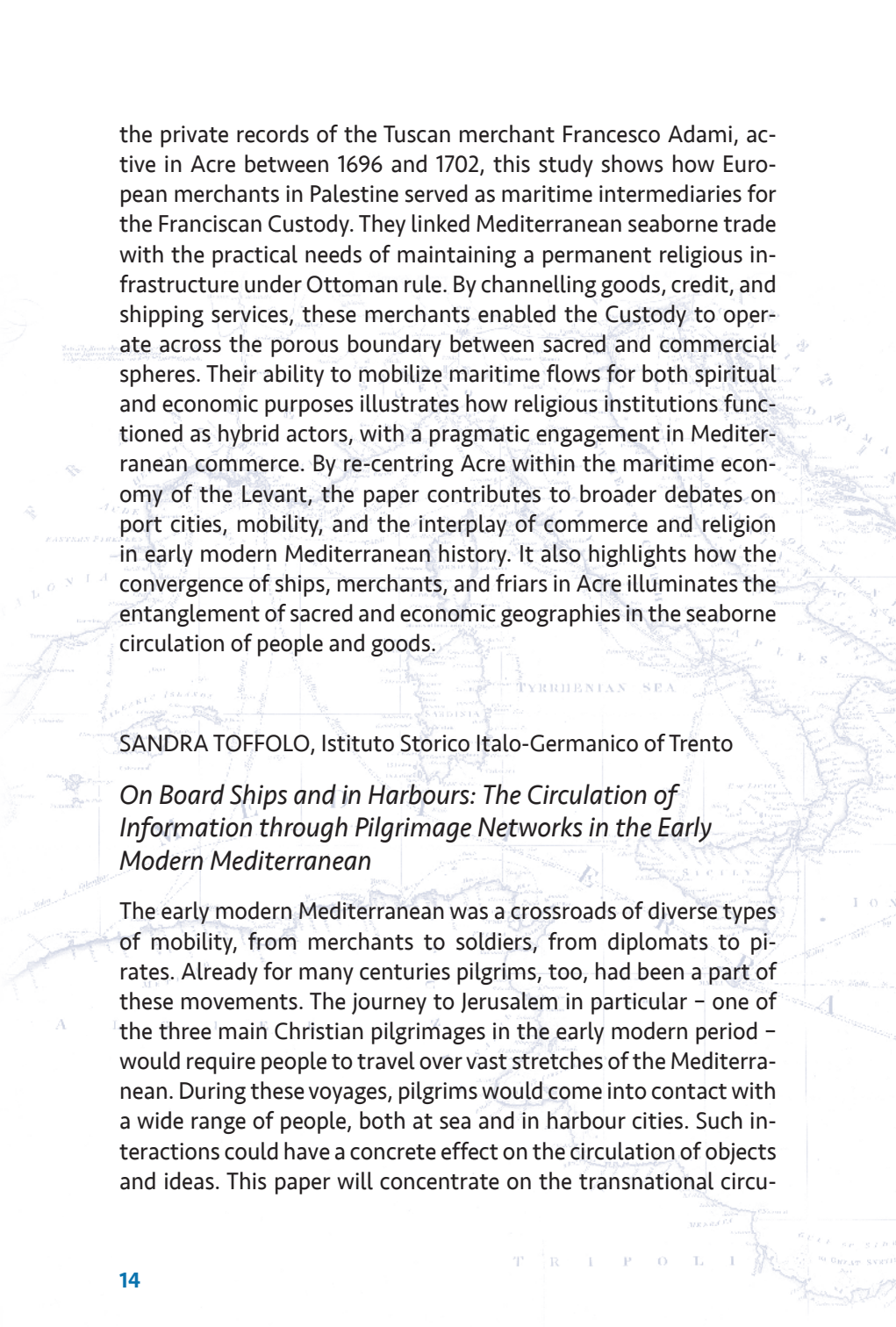
A faint, light blue map of the Mediterranean region serves as the background for the page. It shows the outlines of the continents and major sea routes. Labels for 'LIBYA', 'EGYPT', and 'SYRIA' are visible at the bottom. The map is centered on the Mediterranean Sea, with various coastal cities and islands marked.

financial exactions and judicial summonses, the research highlights the friars' precarious position at the intersection of imperial diplomacy, local governance, and religious representation. The centrality of Arabic legal and financial documentation is complemented by Franciscan sources in Italian and Spanish, which provide additional perspectives on the Custody's strategies and perceptions of these crises. Methodologically, the study combines historical analysis with linguistic scrutiny to illuminate how piracy and maritime violence in the wider Mediterranean were absorbed into the judicial and financial frameworks of Ottoman Jerusalem. Beyond its immediate historical context, this research contributes to broader debates on the entanglement of piracy, diplomacy, and interreligious coexistence in the early modern Mediterranean. The anticipated findings aspire to enrich our understanding of the Custody's adaptive strategies while shedding light on the fragile equilibrium between local legal systems and transregional maritime conflicts.

MATTEO CALCAGNI, University of Pisa

### *Sailing to the Levant: European Merchants and the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land in 17<sup>th</sup>-Century Acre*

This paper investigates the maritime and economic role of Acre as a Levantine port in the seventeenth century, focusing on the interactions between European merchants and the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land. While scholarship on Mediterranean maritime trade has highlighted the prominence of ports such as Smyrna, Alexandria, or Alexandretta in the Ottoman economy, Acre remains a comparatively overlooked node in the maritime networks connecting southern Europe to the Levant. European merchants relied on Acre's harbour as an entry point for the circulation of commodities such as textiles, sugar, soap, silk, and coffee. The Franciscan friars, meanwhile, maintained a logistical presence that extended beyond their spiritual mission: they secured provisions for pilgrims arriving by sea, negotiated shipping contracts, and managed donations and alms transmitted through maritime routes. Through




the private records of the Tuscan merchant Francesco Adami, active in Acre between 1696 and 1702, this study shows how European merchants in Palestine served as maritime intermediaries for the Franciscan Custody. They linked Mediterranean seaborne trade with the practical needs of maintaining a permanent religious infrastructure under Ottoman rule. By channelling goods, credit, and shipping services, these merchants enabled the Custody to operate across the porous boundary between sacred and commercial spheres. Their ability to mobilize maritime flows for both spiritual and economic purposes illustrates how religious institutions functioned as hybrid actors, with a pragmatic engagement in Mediterranean commerce. By re-centring Acre within the maritime economy of the Levant, the paper contributes to broader debates on port cities, mobility, and the interplay of commerce and religion in early modern Mediterranean history. It also highlights how the convergence of ships, merchants, and friars in Acre illuminates the entanglement of sacred and economic geographies in the seaborne circulation of people and goods.

SANDRA TOFFOLO, Istituto Storico Italo-Germanico of Trento

*On Board Ships and in Harbours: The Circulation of Information through Pilgrimage Networks in the Early Modern Mediterranean*

The early modern Mediterranean was a crossroads of diverse types of mobility, from merchants to soldiers, from diplomats to pirates. Already for many centuries pilgrims, too, had been a part of these movements. The journey to Jerusalem in particular – one of the three main Christian pilgrimages in the early modern period – would require people to travel over vast stretches of the Mediterranean. During these voyages, pilgrims would come into contact with a wide range of people, both at sea and in harbour cities. Such interactions could have a concrete effect on the circulation of objects and ideas. This paper will concentrate on the transnational circu-



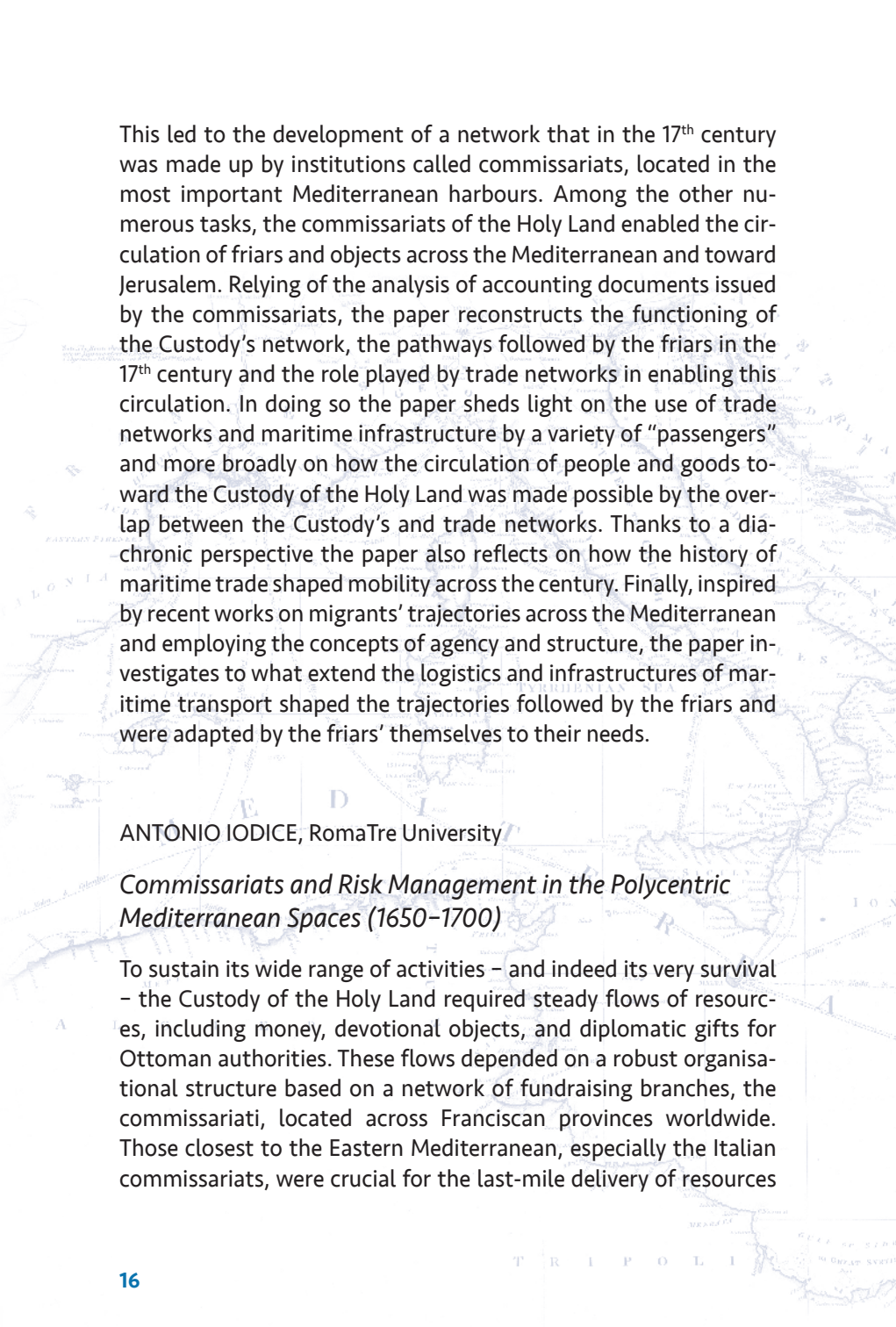
lation of information through pilgrimage networks. This exchange could take place in various media, including for example written texts, oral communication, or visual depictions. The contents could vary from practical information that the pilgrims needed for a short period of time during their own journey, to ideas that could regard events or narratives with a broad international impact. The travellers did not merely have a passive role in this circulation. When they encountered new information they could interpret it in their own way, transform it, add or remove elements, and reconcile it with older ideas. In turn, they could transmit it – together with all the other knowledge they already had – to new audiences, back at home or throughout their journey. In this way, pilgrims in the early modern Mediterranean could play a crucial role in transmitting information to audiences that could be from different geographical, linguistic, or social backgrounds.

**12:00 – 14:00** **SESSION II – HolyLab 2 – Maritime Networks and the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land: Logistics and Infrastructures, Disruptions, and Data Visualization (17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries)**  
**Chair: KATERINA GALANI, University of Piraeus**

FELICITA TRAMONTANA, RomaTre University

*Pathways to Jerusalem: Religious Networks and Maritime Infrastructure in the Mediterranean*

This paper contributes to our understanding of the functioning of early modern maritime networks and, more broadly, of maritime mobility across the Mediterranean, departing from the movement of the Franciscan friars toward Jerusalem. Since its establishment in the 14<sup>th</sup> century the survival of the Custody of the Holy Land was granted by the arrival of resources from other Franciscan provinces.

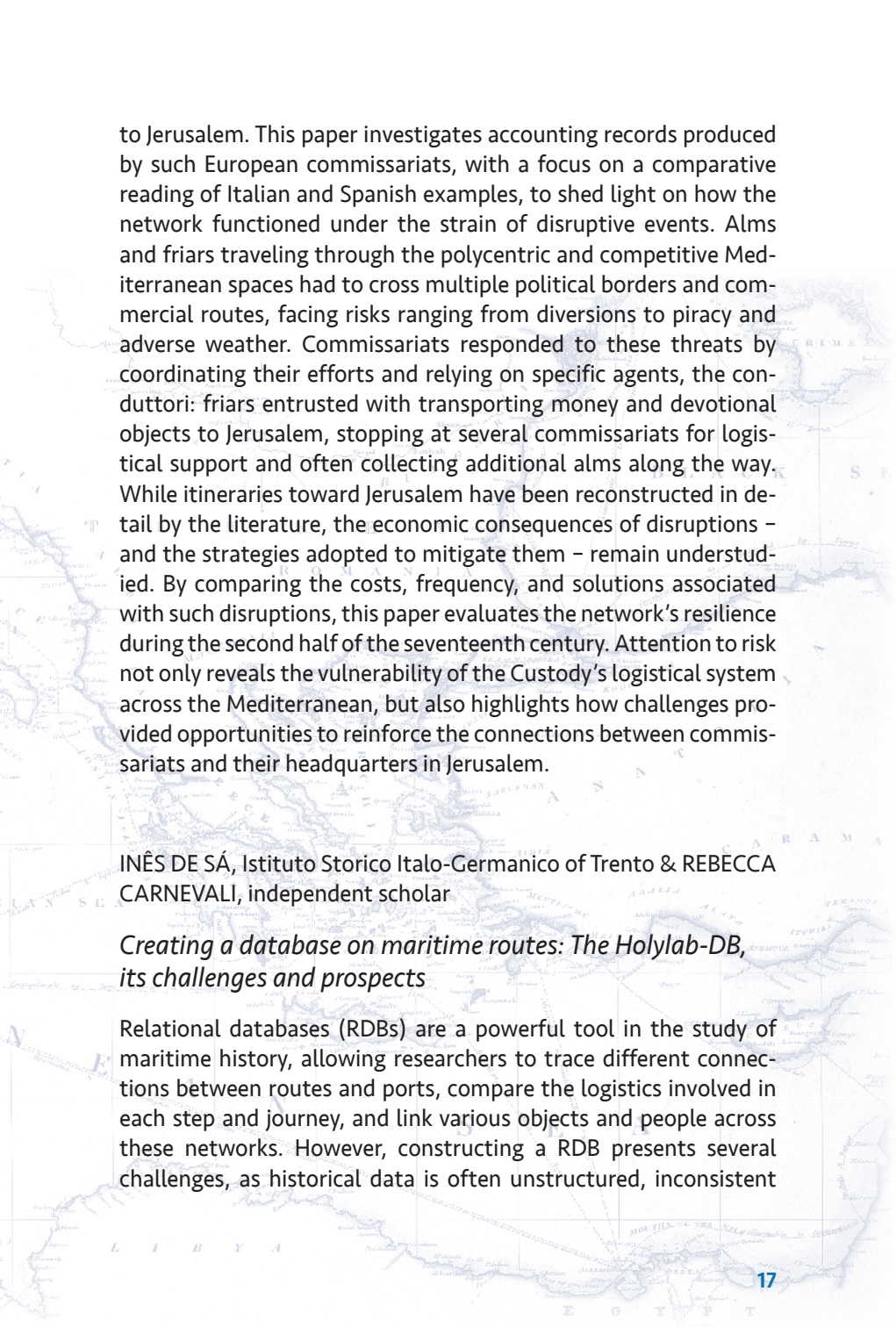


This led to the development of a network that in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was made up by institutions called commissariats, located in the most important Mediterranean harbours. Among the other numerous tasks, the commissariats of the Holy Land enabled the circulation of friars and objects across the Mediterranean and toward Jerusalem. Relying on the analysis of accounting documents issued by the commissariats, the paper reconstructs the functioning of the Custody's network, the pathways followed by the friars in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the role played by trade networks in enabling this circulation. In doing so the paper sheds light on the use of trade networks and maritime infrastructure by a variety of "passengers" and more broadly on how the circulation of people and goods toward the Custody of the Holy Land was made possible by the overlap between the Custody's and trade networks. Thanks to a diachronic perspective the paper also reflects on how the history of maritime trade shaped mobility across the century. Finally, inspired by recent works on migrants' trajectories across the Mediterranean and employing the concepts of agency and structure, the paper investigates to what extent the logistics and infrastructures of maritime transport shaped the trajectories followed by the friars and were adapted by the friars' themselves to their needs.

ANTONIO IODICE, RomaTre University

### *Commissariats and Risk Management in the Polycentric Mediterranean Spaces (1650–1700)*

To sustain its wide range of activities – and indeed its very survival – the Custody of the Holy Land required steady flows of resources, including money, devotional objects, and diplomatic gifts for Ottoman authorities. These flows depended on a robust organisational structure based on a network of fundraising branches, the commissariats, located across Franciscan provinces worldwide. Those closest to the Eastern Mediterranean, especially the Italian commissariats, were crucial for the last-mile delivery of resources

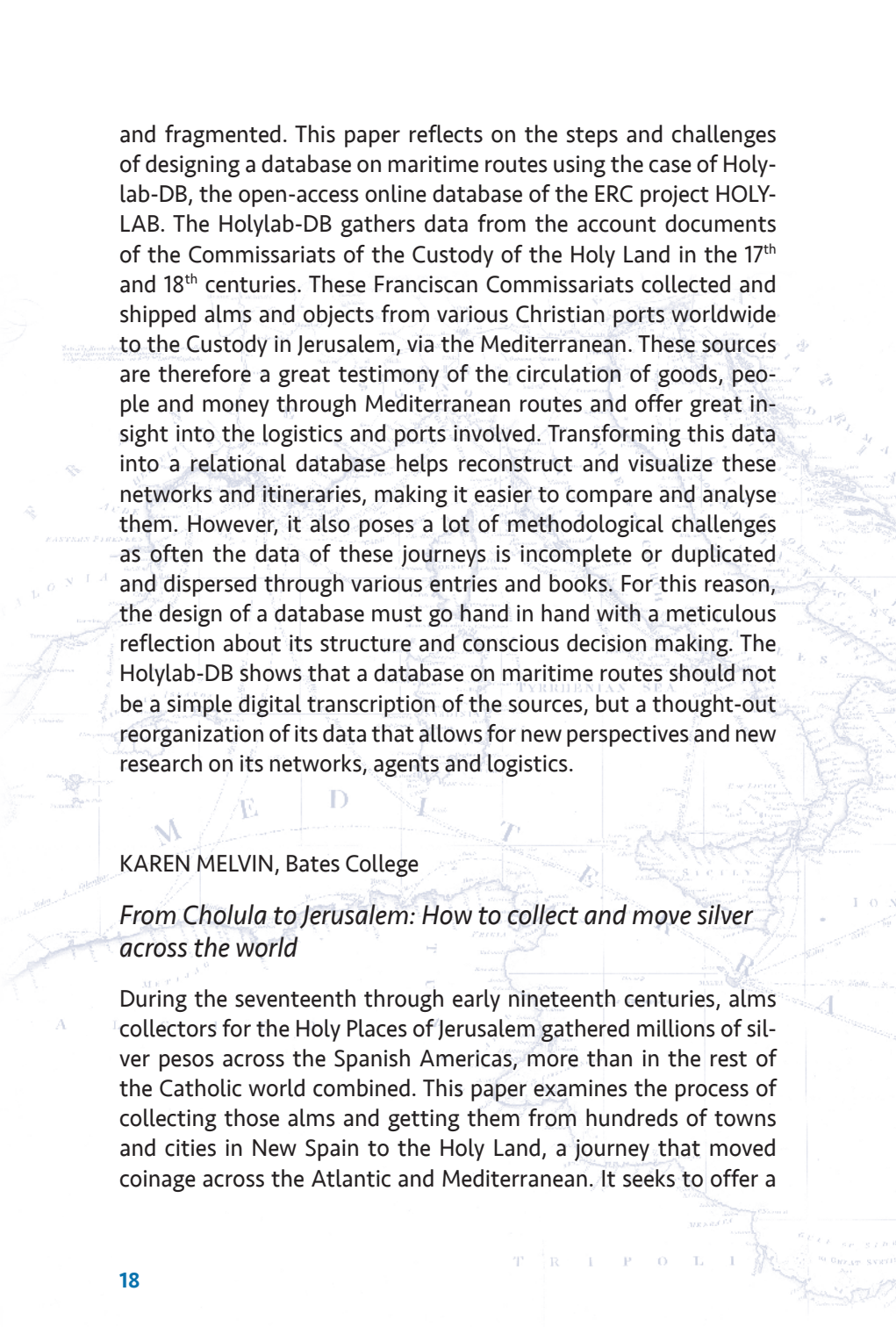


to Jerusalem. This paper investigates accounting records produced by such European commissariats, with a focus on a comparative reading of Italian and Spanish examples, to shed light on how the network functioned under the strain of disruptive events. Alms and friars traveling through the polycentric and competitive Mediterranean spaces had to cross multiple political borders and commercial routes, facing risks ranging from diversions to piracy and adverse weather. Commissariats responded to these threats by coordinating their efforts and relying on specific agents, the *conduttori*: friars entrusted with transporting money and devotional objects to Jerusalem, stopping at several commissariats for logistical support and often collecting additional alms along the way. While itineraries toward Jerusalem have been reconstructed in detail by the literature, the economic consequences of disruptions – and the strategies adopted to mitigate them – remain understudied. By comparing the costs, frequency, and solutions associated with such disruptions, this paper evaluates the network’s resilience during the second half of the seventeenth century. Attention to risk not only reveals the vulnerability of the Custody’s logistical system across the Mediterranean, but also highlights how challenges provided opportunities to reinforce the connections between commissariats and their headquarters in Jerusalem.

INÊS DE SÁ, Istituto Storico Italo-Germanico of Trento & REBECCA CARNEVALI, independent scholar

### *Creating a database on maritime routes: The HolyLab-DB, its challenges and prospects*

Relational databases (RDBs) are a powerful tool in the study of maritime history, allowing researchers to trace different connections between routes and ports, compare the logistics involved in each step and journey, and link various objects and people across these networks. However, constructing a RDB presents several challenges, as historical data is often unstructured, inconsistent

The background of the page is a faded, light blue map of the Mediterranean region. The word 'MEDITERRANEAN' is written in large, spaced-out letters across the center of the map. Other visible labels include 'TRIPOLI' at the bottom, 'MADRID' on the left, and 'SICILY' on the right. The map shows coastlines, major cities, and some shipping routes.

and fragmented. This paper reflects on the steps and challenges of designing a database on maritime routes using the case of Holylab-DB, the open-access online database of the ERC project HOLYLAB. The Holylab-DB gathers data from the account documents of the Commissariats of the Custody of the Holy Land in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. These Franciscan Commissariats collected and shipped alms and objects from various Christian ports worldwide to the Custody in Jerusalem, via the Mediterranean. These sources are therefore a great testimony of the circulation of goods, people and money through Mediterranean routes and offer great insight into the logistics and ports involved. Transforming this data into a relational database helps reconstruct and visualize these networks and itineraries, making it easier to compare and analyse them. However, it also poses a lot of methodological challenges as often the data of these journeys is incomplete or duplicated and dispersed through various entries and books. For this reason, the design of a database must go hand in hand with a meticulous reflection about its structure and conscious decision making. The Holylab-DB shows that a database on maritime routes should not be a simple digital transcription of the sources, but a thought-out reorganization of its data that allows for new perspectives and new research on its networks, agents and logistics.

KAREN MELVIN, Bates College

### *From Cholula to Jerusalem: How to collect and move silver across the world*

During the seventeenth through early nineteenth centuries, alms collectors for the Holy Places of Jerusalem gathered millions of silver pesos across the Spanish Americas, more than in the rest of the Catholic world combined. This paper examines the process of collecting those alms and getting them from hundreds of towns and cities in New Spain to the Holy Land, a journey that moved coinage across the Atlantic and Mediterranean. It seeks to offer a

wide-lensed perspective of where and how alms collectors worked as well as how they managed donations. It accompanies these collectors and their mules as they traversed regional routes timed to agricultural cycles, set up their collection tables in busy church plazas, and engaged conversation in fancy sitting rooms. It also follows the money as it moved from donors' pocketbooks, into safes, and eventually into the crates that carried it along the complex itinerary of commercial routes that connected New Spain and the Holy Land.

**15:30 – 17:30**

**SESSION III – Trans-Mediterranean Migrations and Mobilities: A Visual Approach**

**Chair: MATTEO BARBANO, Institute for Mediterranean Studies – FORTH**

EVA-MARIA TROELENBERG, Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf

*The Suez Canal and the Mediterranean – Images of a Contact Zone*

With the opening of the Suez Canal in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a geographical and geopolitical axis of connection emerged that repositioned the Mediterranean globally. Popular historical narratives of the Mediterranean often argue that precisely such globalization steps of the industrial age transformed the Mediterranean into a kind of secondary, historically less significant region. On the contrary, I would like to argue that it is precisely this focus on mobility infrastructures—on the “engine room” of acceleration—that helps us grasp the specific complexity of the concept of the Mediterranean in the modern and contemporary world. Parallel to this history of accelerated mobility runs a history of intensified visual communication. The medium of photography, as well as other visual media, lead to an exponentially increased extent in the reproduction and circulation of images. In my talk, I will combine these two lines of thought using the example of the

Suez Canal. Even before its actual technical realization, this infrastructure project became an enormously prominent visual motif, reflected in a wide variety of genres and media. The moment of contact between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea often takes center stage, whether literally or allegorically. These images reveal numerous premises from the history of ideas – from political conflicts to colonial clichés, from concepts of historical time to technological utopias or even dystopias.

ANNA SOPHIA MESSNER, Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf

*Visual Histories of (Im)Mobility in the Port City of Marseille in the Context of Jewish Migration Processes across the Mediterranean*

From 1940-1941 the German-Jewish writer Anna Seghers was waiting in transit in the French port city of Marseille during her escape from Nazi-Germany. In her novel *Transit*, Seghers describes her experiences of immobility and mobility as well as of the floating state of uncertainty of her situation as someone who encounters the Mediterranean shore as a passer-through. Standing at the border between land and sea, one becomes a migrant, with all its implications of loss and trauma. At the beginning of the 1960s, the French journalist Maurice Séveno followed North African Jews on their migration routes from North Africa via Marseille to Israel. The resulting documentary film “Une terre qui leurs est promise” was released in 1962. The movie starts in the French port city of Marseille in the transit camp “Camp du Grand Arénas”, where the escaping Jews waited to continue their emigration to Israel. The port city of Marseille, situated at the crossroads between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, has made the city an important hub for international shipping, trade, and migration. During the Nazi era, Marseille had become the capital of exiles and one of the main harbors for European Jews to escape the threat of the Nazi Regime. After the Second World War, and in the context of the founding of

the State of Israel in 1948 as well as the decolonization processes in North Africa and the Near and Middle East, Marseille again became a city of transit for Jewish refugees from North Africa and Egypt. Against this background, and by the example of visual, material, and artistic testimonies and objects, this paper analyzes and discusses the histories and condition of the port city of Marseille as a place of transit in the context of Jewish migration processes across the Mediterranean. Thereby, it emphasizes and negotiates Jewish perspectives on various experiences, states and infrastructures of (im)mobility.

ARGYRIOS SAKORAFAS, Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf

*The Ship as a Historical Arena: Migration Journeys and Shipboard Life Aboard Mediterranean Transatlantic Liners in the Early Twentieth Century*

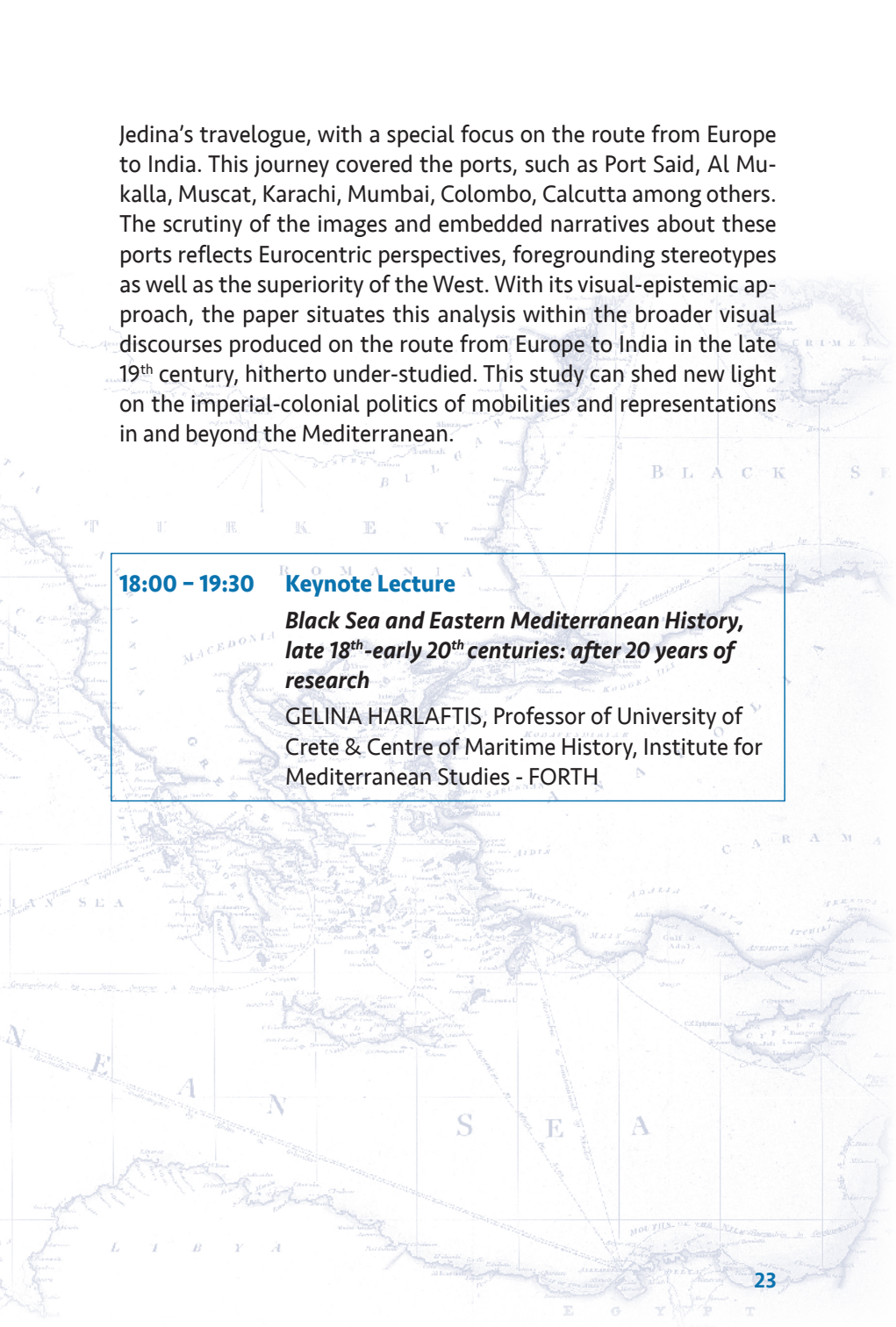
Historians have long been drawn to the maritime world, where ships and ports function as critical nodes in the movement of people, goods, and ideas. Yet, shipboard life has received comparatively limited attention despite its significance, as expressed by several scholars (Schlör 2015, Rediker 2007, and others). This has also been demonstrated in recent research focusing on the passages' sociocultural dimensions through histories of seafaring, slave trade, and piracy. As these studies show, the isolation in a confined space, detached from the onshore world, can lead us to an interpretation of the ship as an in-between space, a vessel of mobility but also immobility. Historians, including Wenzlhuemer and Dusinberre (2016), have further emphasized passages as facilitators of global connections but argued that ships are still overlooked historical arenas. While recent studies have explored migration and ship passages across historical contexts, research on journeys during the early twentieth-century transatlantic migration wave remains limited, particularly from the Mediterranean. While the journey has been recorded in migrant and non-migrant memories, life aboard migrant liners remains one of the

least studied aspects in migration history. Drawing upon passenger records, shipping line and government archives, this paper explores the multi-layered dimensions of life aboard Mediterranean migrant liners in the early twentieth century, through particular shipping lines, such as the Greek transatlantic lines and Austro-Americana. While previous research has focused on departure and arrival points, this study gives prominence to the ship, investigating transnational encounters, sanitary conditions, food quality, and state handling. By foregrounding the ship as a historical arena, this paper demonstrates its role as a transnational contact zone and argues that the transatlantic passage was simultaneously of central importance for the shipping lines, a key moment for the passengers, whether migrants or cabin-class, and a recurring challenge for the authorities.

SHRADDHA BHATAWADEKAR, Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf

### *Sustaining an Imperial Gaze: Leopold von Jedina's Trans-Mediterranean Travel in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century*

This paper examines the depictions of trans-Mediterranean travels in the travelogue of Leopold von Jedina published in 1891. Von Jedina was a naval officer with a rank 'ship-of-the-line lieutenant' in k.u.k—the Austro-Hungarian Empire. As a lieutenant of His Majesty's ship *Fasana*, he accompanied the touring Royal party of Archduke Leopold Ferdinand to Asia from 1887. Starting from Pula, an important port of the Austro-Hungarian Empire of the time, they travelled along Egypt, Arabia, India and further to countries like Japan, China among others before returning to Austria in 1889. Von Jedina has written quite extensively about life on board the ship and all the places visited: his first impressions, architecture, people, races, customs, occupations, etc. His account is accompanied by a number of photographs, which offer glimpses into the life in these places. The study of this travelogue offers insights into the historical geographies as well as the transnational politics of the time. However, throughout his writings and the choice of images, his imperial gaze is evident. This paper critically analyzes the illustrations of the trans-Mediterranean ports which appear in Von



Jedina's travelogue, with a special focus on the route from Europe to India. This journey covered the ports, such as Port Said, Al Mukalla, Muscat, Karachi, Mumbai, Colombo, Calcutta among others. The scrutiny of the images and embedded narratives about these ports reflects Eurocentric perspectives, foregrounding stereotypes as well as the superiority of the West. With its visual-epistemic approach, the paper situates this analysis within the broader visual discourses produced on the route from Europe to India in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, hitherto under-studied. This study can shed new light on the imperial-colonial politics of mobilities and representations in and beyond the Mediterranean.

**18:00 – 19:30**   **Keynote Lecture**

***Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean History, late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries: after 20 years of research***

GELINA HARLAFTIS, Professor of University of Crete & Centre of Maritime History, Institute for Mediterranean Studies - FORTH

# Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> of May 2026

## ROOM 2

9:30 – 11:30

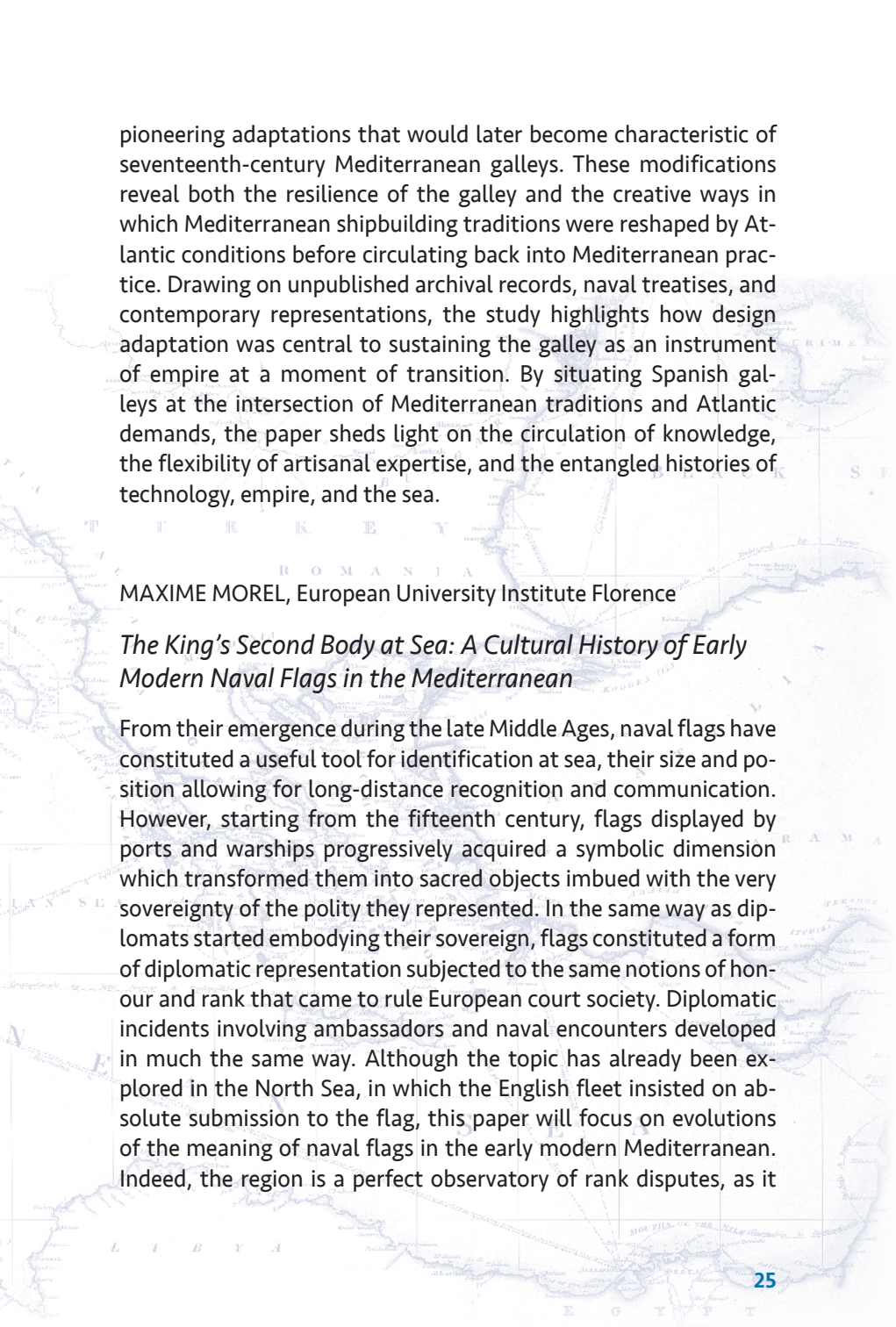
**SESSION I – Ships, Material Culture, and  
Maritime Transport**

**Chair: JORDI IBARZ GELABERT, University of  
Barcelona**

A. JORGE AGUILERA-LÓPEZ, University of Helsinki

### *The Atlanticisation of the Mediterranean Galley: Design Adaptation in the Spanish Galleys (1580–1600)*

After 1580, the Spanish Monarchy underwent what historians have termed the “Atlantic turn,” redirecting resources and priorities from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. This shift has often been associated with the decline of the galley, long regarded as the quintessential vessel of Mediterranean warfare. Yet galleys retained great prestige following Lepanto and remained a central asset in Spanish strategy — a confidence that justified deploying them beyond their habitual Mediterranean range. Their extended use, however, required technical adjustments: hulls, rigging, and structural reinforcements had to be modified to withstand Atlantic waters, enemies, and operational demands. This paper examines the Atlanticisation of the Iberian galleys between 1580 and 1600. In this period of intense experimentation, captains and shipwrights adjusted hull proportions, rigging, and stern structures,



pioneering adaptations that would later become characteristic of seventeenth-century Mediterranean galleys. These modifications reveal both the resilience of the galley and the creative ways in which Mediterranean shipbuilding traditions were reshaped by Atlantic conditions before circulating back into Mediterranean practice. Drawing on unpublished archival records, naval treatises, and contemporary representations, the study highlights how design adaptation was central to sustaining the galley as an instrument of empire at a moment of transition. By situating Spanish galleys at the intersection of Mediterranean traditions and Atlantic demands, the paper sheds light on the circulation of knowledge, the flexibility of artisanal expertise, and the entangled histories of technology, empire, and the sea.

MAXIME MOREL, European University Institute Florence

*The King's Second Body at Sea: A Cultural History of Early Modern Naval Flags in the Mediterranean*

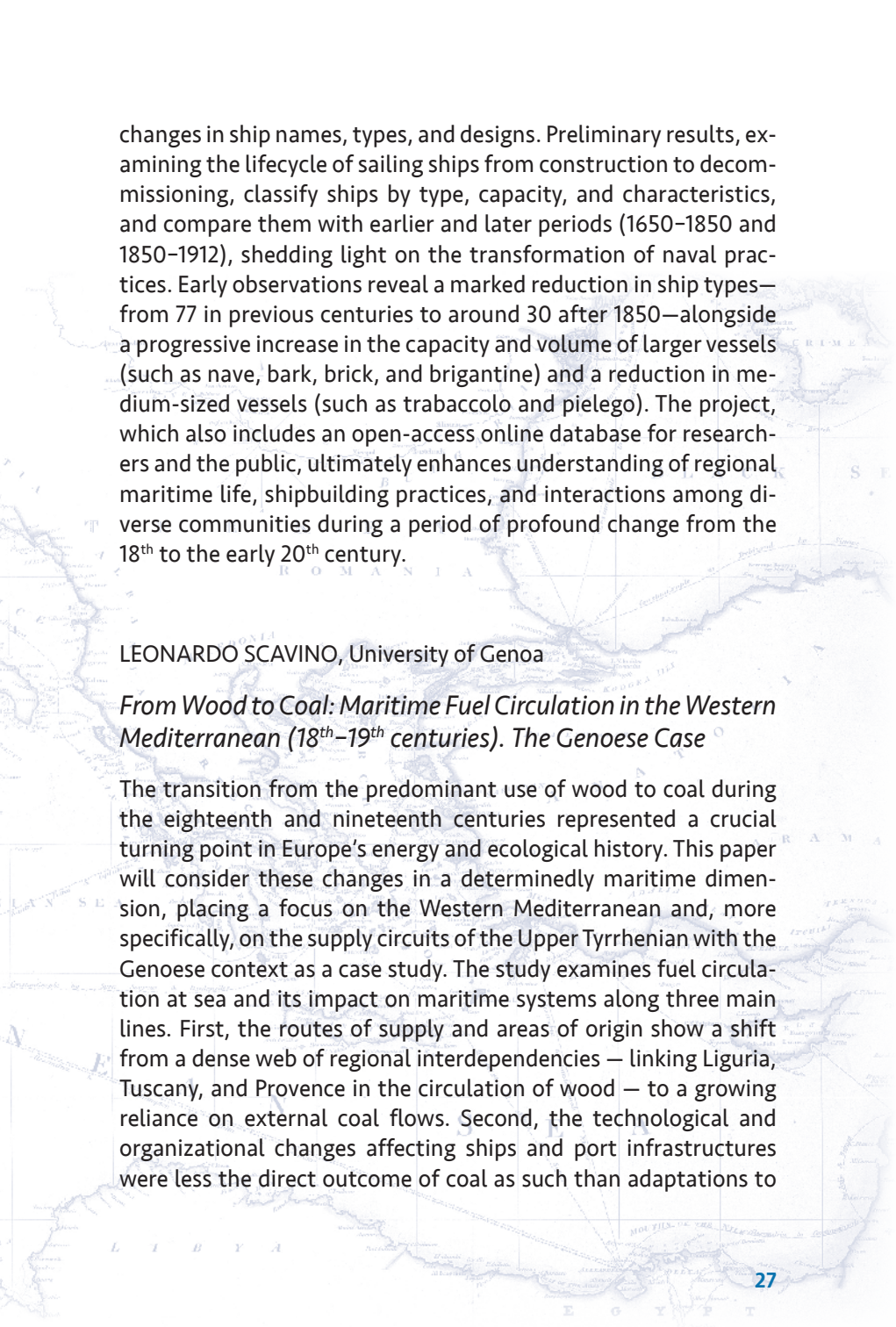
From their emergence during the late Middle Ages, naval flags have constituted a useful tool for identification at sea, their size and position allowing for long-distance recognition and communication. However, starting from the fifteenth century, flags displayed by ports and warships progressively acquired a symbolic dimension which transformed them into sacred objects imbued with the very sovereignty of the polity they represented. In the same way as diplomats started embodying their sovereign, flags constituted a form of diplomatic representation subjected to the same notions of honour and rank that came to rule European court society. Diplomatic incidents involving ambassadors and naval encounters developed in much the same way. Although the topic has already been explored in the North Sea, in which the English fleet insisted on absolute submission to the flag, this paper will focus on evolutions of the meaning of naval flags in the early modern Mediterranean. Indeed, the region is a perfect observatory of rank disputes, as it

concentrates encounters between kingdoms, duchies, republics, empires, and even the pope. Through examples of such encounters, I will show that early modern flags constituted sacred objects, in the same sense that a monarch's body was sacred. In this regard, efforts by Louis XIV's navy to force the Spanish fleet to strike their flag as a symbol of submission of one king to another, the separation of the pope's temporal and spiritual authority into two different flags, subtle changes in flag design – heraldic or textile – and scholarly memoranda all hint at the cultural meaning of flags for contemporary actors, more than a century before they were imbued with new significance during the emergence of the nation.

ZRINKA PODHRAŠKI ČIZMEK, University of Zagreb, Catholic Faculty of Theology

### *Comparison of Sailing Ships from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century: A Paradigm Shift*

This research investigates the evolution of sailing ships in the Adriatic from the 18<sup>th</sup> century through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, highlighting significant shifts in shipbuilding paradigms. Earlier studies draw on approximately 20,000 records from the Croatian Maritime Regesta (Nikola Čolak, 1985, 1993, 2017, and 4<sup>th</sup> volume unpublished), part of the Codex Diplomaticus Maritimus Croatiae. These records mention 25,500 ships and 77 distinct ship types, providing a detailed view of fleets, shipbuilding practices, and maritime activity. This work was part of the CROMARESHIP project (2021–2026) and its 15 associated international quadrilingual exhibitions, involving 20 experts from Croatia, Italy, Greece, and Montenegro across 16 institutions, within the exhibition series “Adriatic and Ionian Ships in the Modern Age (1650–1850).” The current objective is the development of a comprehensive database, created by the University of Zadar with the author's modest contribution, incorporating data from maritime yearbooks (Anuari marittimi) and covering the period 1850–1918, documenting



changes in ship names, types, and designs. Preliminary results, examining the lifecycle of sailing ships from construction to decommissioning, classify ships by type, capacity, and characteristics, and compare them with earlier and later periods (1650–1850 and 1850–1912), shedding light on the transformation of naval practices. Early observations reveal a marked reduction in ship types—from 77 in previous centuries to around 30 after 1850—alongside a progressive increase in the capacity and volume of larger vessels (such as nave, bark, brick, and brigantine) and a reduction in medium-sized vessels (such as trabaccolo and pielego). The project, which also includes an open-access online database for researchers and the public, ultimately enhances understanding of regional maritime life, shipbuilding practices, and interactions among diverse communities during a period of profound change from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

LEONARDO SCAVINO, University of Genoa

*From Wood to Coal: Maritime Fuel Circulation in the Western Mediterranean (18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries). The Genoese Case*

The transition from the predominant use of wood to coal during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries represented a crucial turning point in Europe's energy and ecological history. This paper will consider these changes in a determinedly maritime dimension, placing a focus on the Western Mediterranean and, more specifically, on the supply circuits of the Upper Tyrrhenian with the Genoese context as a case study. The study examines fuel circulation at sea and its impact on maritime systems along three main lines. First, the routes of supply and areas of origin show a shift from a dense web of regional interdependencies — linking Liguria, Tuscany, and Provence in the circulation of wood — to a growing reliance on external coal flows. Second, the technological and organizational changes affecting ships and port infrastructures were less the direct outcome of coal as such than adaptations to

the new logistics of supply that coal required. Third, the rising demand for this fuel intersected with the process of regional industrialization, progressively “carbonizing” the energy requirements of both maritime and non-maritime economies. The Genoese case is considered interpretively within the wider historiographical debate of the degree of energy self-sufficiency of the Mediterranean, compared to Northern Europe, often described as a “latecomer” in the drive for industrialization. While not seeking to resolve such broadly framed issues here, the paper hopes to provide some initial contribution in identifying some interpretative keys: the specific maritime configurations of resource management and circulation in the Mediterranean, and the limits and potentiality of a region marked comparatively more by interdependence than autonomy. In this respect Genoa serves as a strategic observatory for understanding the maritime dimensions of the energy transition and situating them within a comparative and multilayered Mediterranean history.

**12:00 – 14:00**    **SESSION II – Peoples on the Move across the Seas**  
**Chair: SABINE FLORENCE FABIJANEC, Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences**

ANTE BEĆIR, Croatian Institute of History

*Migrations from Slavonia to the Italian region of Marche  
(cca 1370-1450)*

This presentation will consider the migrations from the eastern Adriatic and its hinterland to Italian communes in the Marche region between the late 14<sup>th</sup> and mid-15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Using mostly Anconitan sources such as statutes, council registers, and notarial records, it traces the arrival of Slavic newcomers and their roles as laborers, sailors, artisans, merchants, or even as officials. The terms Slavonia and sclau/sclauoni is used in a very broad sense

in the Italian documents as to denote people arriving from an area between approximately Ljubljana or Monfalcone (Tržič) up to the river Bojana. These individuals often formed communities based on shared language and origin, visible in confraternities and *universitates sclavorum* along the Adriatic coast. The study also considers how Italian documents employed the terms *sclavi* and *Sclauonia*, revealing shifting perceptions of identity. By focusing on patterns of settlement, integration, and interaction with local societies, the paper highlights both solidarity within migrant groups and their encounters with other communities. In doing so, it situates Slavic migration within broader dynamics of communication, mobility, and cultural exchange in the late medieval Adriatic.

JOÃO GABRIEL COVOLAN SILVA, Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa

*Atlantic Connections, Mediterranean Networks: Portuguese New Christians and English Trade in Early Seventeenth-Century Livorno*

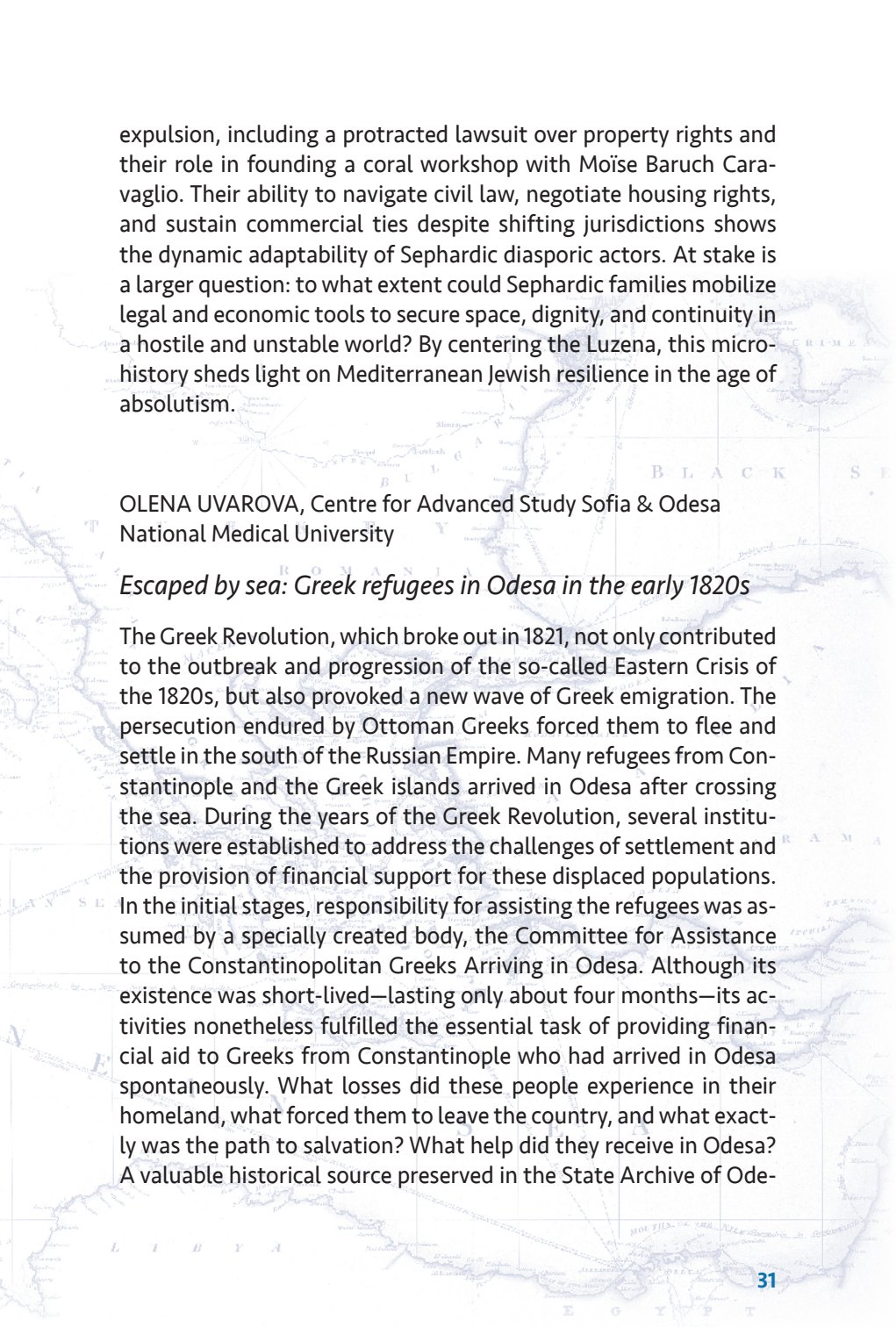
In this presentation, I aim to explore the interactions between English merchants and corsairs and the Portuguese community of Livorno in the early seventeenth century, with a particular focus on the role of trade in Portuguese colonial commodities. During the first two decades of this century, the Portuguese community – mainly composed of New Christians and Jews – emerged as a key facilitator of English commercial and maritime incursions into the Mediterranean. Their interactions contributed to the establishment of both communities in the Medicean port of Livorno, while also fostering the circulation of goods, information, and credit across the Atlantic and Mediterranean worlds. By analysing a wide range of primary sources – including notarial records, commercial contracts, diplomatic correspondence, and judicial proceedings – I will examine how patterns of collaboration, negotiation, and conflict shaped the commercial dynamics between these communities. Special attention is paid to the ways in which shared commer-

cial interests and partnerships enabled the integration of foreign merchants within pivotal Mediterranean trade hubs. Furthermore, this paper engages with historiographical debates to assess whether the partnerships between English merchants and Portuguese New Christians and Jews in Tuscany can be framed as a form of cross-cultural trade. By foregrounding the agency of diasporic actors and the permeability of confessional boundaries, this research contributes to broader discussions on the interconnection of Atlantic and Mediterranean commercial circuits and the processes that underpinned the formation of early modern trading diasporas.

VINCENZO ZOCCO, University of Catania

*From Ragusa to Naples and Back Again: The Luzena Family and the Fragile Routes of Sephardic Mobility in the 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Mediterranean*

This paper reconstructs the trajectory of the Luzena family, Sephardic Jews of probable Iberian origin who settled in Ragusa (Dubrovnik) and later expanded their activities to Livorno, Naples, and Pisa in the first half of the eighteenth century. Their story illustrates the complex entanglements of commerce, law, and identity across the fragmented political and religious landscapes of the early modern Mediterranean. Arriving in Naples in 1741, Moses Luzena and his sons hoped to benefit from the brief opening offered by Charles of Bourbon's reintegration of Jews into the Kingdom of Naples. Their business, which included the management of two cafés in Via Toledo and anticipated a large shipment of goods, was violently interrupted in 1742 by accusations of forced circumcision of a Christian youth. Despite a robust defense, with depositions from Ragusan and Neapolitan Christians attesting to their good reputation, the family was expelled—one of the earliest signs of the failure of Bourbon policy and the fragility of Jewish settlement in the Kingdom. The paper draws on unpublished archival materials to examine the Luzena family's legal strategies in Livorno and Pisa following their



expulsion, including a protracted lawsuit over property rights and their role in founding a coral workshop with Moïse Baruch Caravaglio. Their ability to navigate civil law, negotiate housing rights, and sustain commercial ties despite shifting jurisdictions shows the dynamic adaptability of Sephardic diasporic actors. At stake is a larger question: to what extent could Sephardic families mobilize legal and economic tools to secure space, dignity, and continuity in a hostile and unstable world? By centering the Luzena, this micro-history sheds light on Mediterranean Jewish resilience in the age of absolutism.

OLENA UVAROVA, Centre for Advanced Study Sofia & Odesa  
National Medical University

### *Escaped by sea: Greek refugees in Odesa in the early 1820s*

The Greek Revolution, which broke out in 1821, not only contributed to the outbreak and progression of the so-called Eastern Crisis of the 1820s, but also provoked a new wave of Greek emigration. The persecution endured by Ottoman Greeks forced them to flee and settle in the south of the Russian Empire. Many refugees from Constantinople and the Greek islands arrived in Odesa after crossing the sea. During the years of the Greek Revolution, several institutions were established to address the challenges of settlement and the provision of financial support for these displaced populations. In the initial stages, responsibility for assisting the refugees was assumed by a specially created body, the Committee for Assistance to the Constantinopolitan Greeks Arriving in Odesa. Although its existence was short-lived—lasting only about four months—its activities nonetheless fulfilled the essential task of providing financial aid to Greeks from Constantinople who had arrived in Odesa spontaneously. What losses did these people experience in their homeland, what forced them to leave the country, and what exactly was the path to salvation? What help did they receive in Odesa? A valuable historical source preserved in the State Archive of Ode-

sa Region consists of petitions submitted by the refugees, some of them handwritten in Greek, which shed light on individual destinies and the challenges of daily life. These documents, along with other records associated with the Committee, make it possible to trace how and under what circumstances Greeks—primarily from Constantinople but also from other parts of the Ottoman Empire, including the islands—sailed to Odesa in search of refuge.

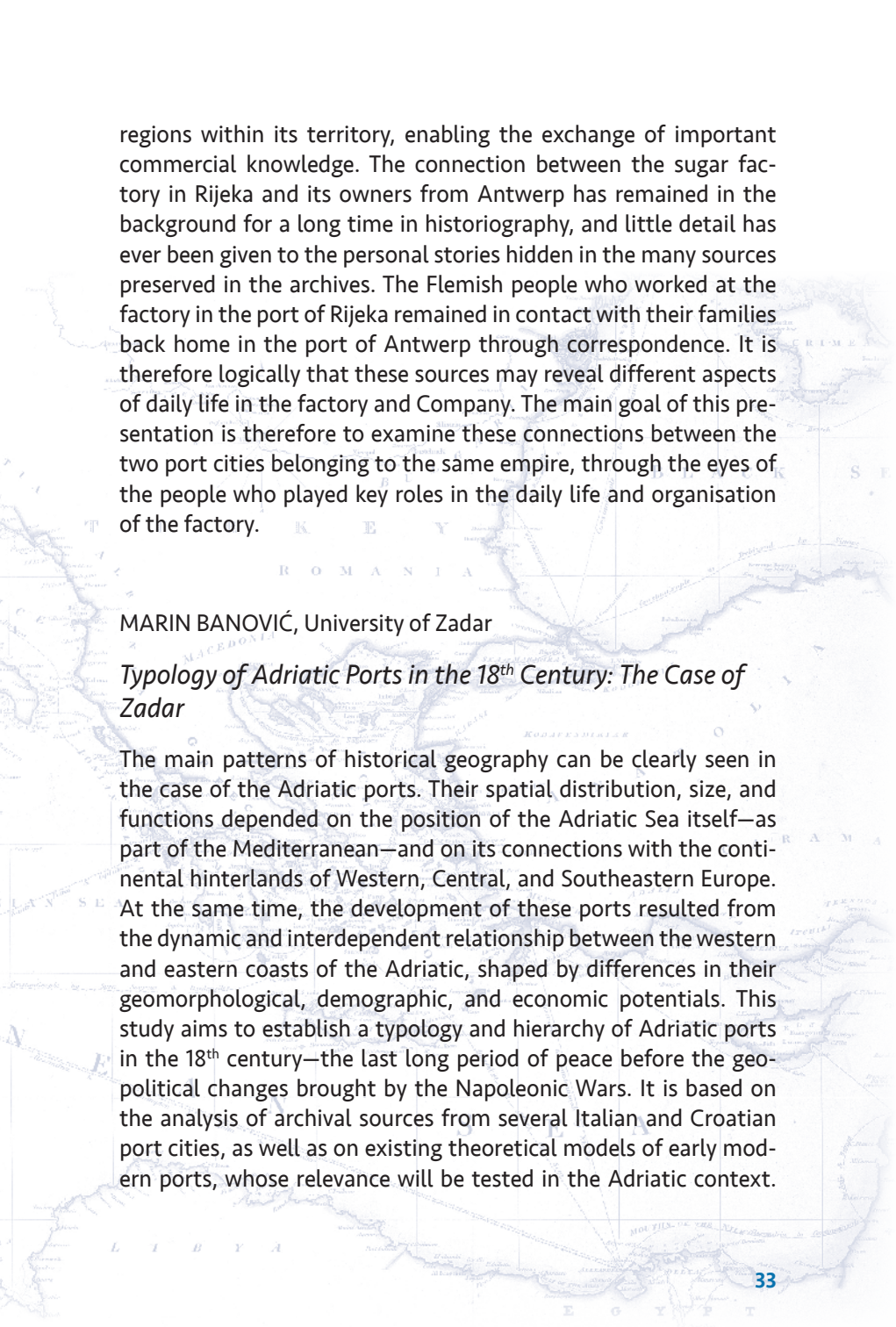
**15:30 – 17:30**    **SESSION III – Ports, Connections and Costal Shipping in the Mediterranean**

**Chair: ANNA SYDORENKO, Institute for Mediterranean Studies – FORTH**

MAJA PERIĆ, Croatian Institute of History

*How Vienna connected the ports of Antwerp and Rijeka. The story of the sugar factory and the Privileged Company of Trieste and Fiume from 1750-1775*

In 1750, with the support of the Viennese court and Maria Theresia, the free ports of Rijeka and Trieste were granted a patent regarding the import of various types of exotic products for consumption throughout the whole territory of the Habsburg Empire. The ports received specific privileges which meant among other things the exemption of taxes and tolls related to maritime trade and the Privileged Company of Trieste and Fiume was established. One of the most important raw materials imported because of its status as a luxury product was sugar. Consequently, a sugar refinery was established in Rijeka, which became the most important maritime location for sugar production in the Habsburg Empire and in South-eastern Europe. The Viennese court carefully selected experienced leaders to manage the factory: wealthy merchants and bankers from Antwerp who invested in the Company and factories. In this way, Vienna succeeded in connecting two of its relatively distant



regions within its territory, enabling the exchange of important commercial knowledge. The connection between the sugar factory in Rijeka and its owners from Antwerp has remained in the background for a long time in historiography, and little detail has ever been given to the personal stories hidden in the many sources preserved in the archives. The Flemish people who worked at the factory in the port of Rijeka remained in contact with their families back home in the port of Antwerp through correspondence. It is therefore logically that these sources may reveal different aspects of daily life in the factory and Company. The main goal of this presentation is therefore to examine these connections between the two port cities belonging to the same empire, through the eyes of the people who played key roles in the daily life and organisation of the factory.

MARIN BANOVIĆ, University of Zadar

*Typology of Adriatic Ports in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century: The Case of Zadar*

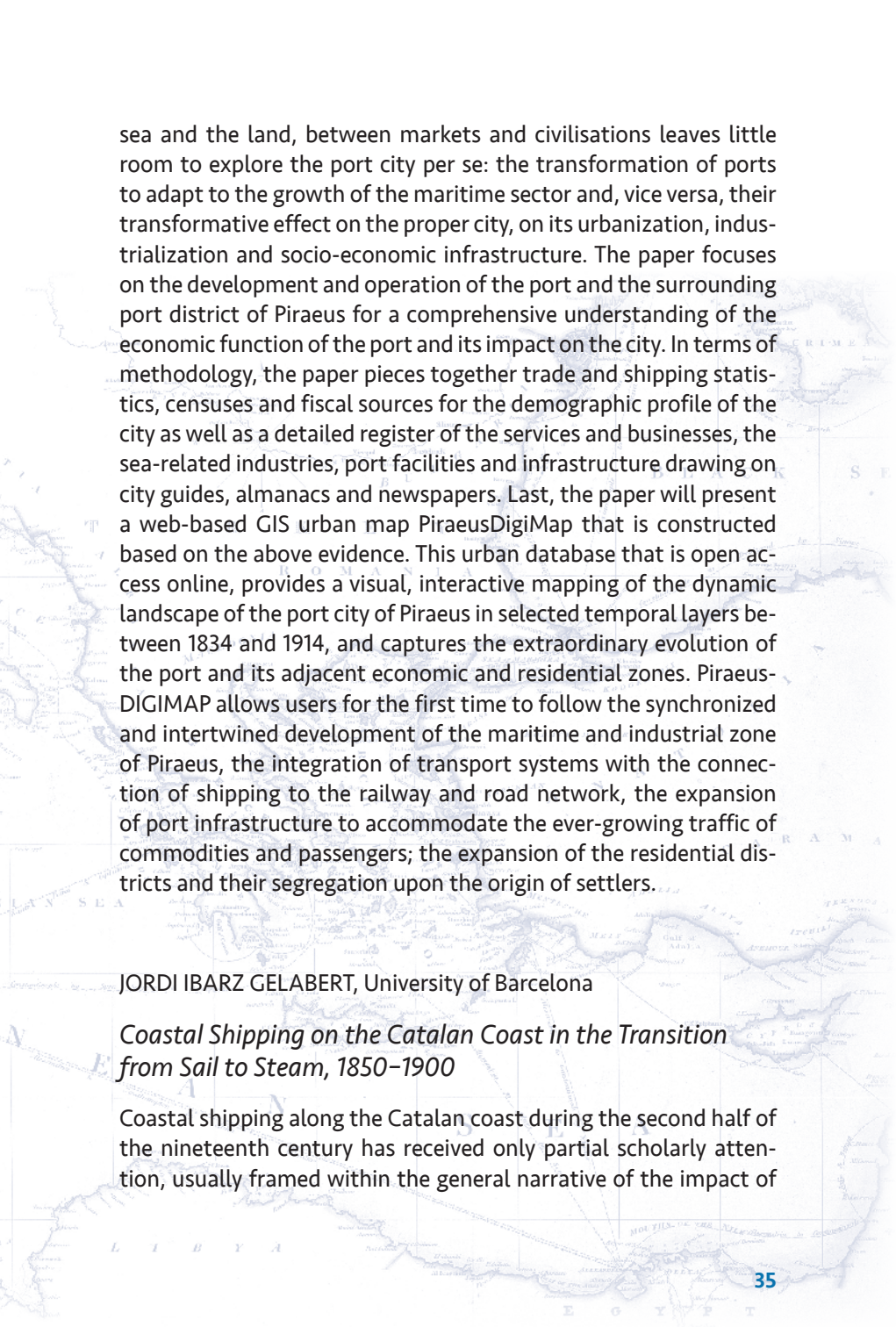
The main patterns of historical geography can be clearly seen in the case of the Adriatic ports. Their spatial distribution, size, and functions depended on the position of the Adriatic Sea itself—as part of the Mediterranean—and on its connections with the continental hinterlands of Western, Central, and Southeastern Europe. At the same time, the development of these ports resulted from the dynamic and interdependent relationship between the western and eastern coasts of the Adriatic, shaped by differences in their geomorphological, demographic, and economic potentials. This study aims to establish a typology and hierarchy of Adriatic ports in the 18<sup>th</sup> century—the last long period of peace before the geopolitical changes brought by the Napoleonic Wars. It is based on the analysis of archival sources from several Italian and Croatian port cities, as well as on existing theoretical models of early modern ports, whose relevance will be tested in the Adriatic context.

Special attention is given to the port of Zadar, analyzed in relation to its geographical position and to the city's economic and administrative role within the regional network of Adriatic ports.

KATERINA GALANI, University of Piraeus

### *The creation of the maritime centre of Piraeus in the long 19<sup>th</sup> century. Mapping functional and spatial developments through GIS*

The paper draws upon the research project The Development of the port-city of Piraeus in the age of Steam and Globalization that was hosted by the National Hellenic Research Foundation, where maritime economic history was combined with urban studies and GIS technology to map the functional and spatial development of the port city of Piraeus in the long 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the nascent Greek state, Piraeus was gradually transformed between 1834 and 1914 into the biggest national port and the forerunner of industrialization in Greece. To the present day, Piraeus remains an international hub, the biggest container port in the Mediterranean, the fourth in Europe, and the headquarters of the largest merchant fleet in the world. In the ever-changing and ever-demanding circumstances of technological innovation and global interconnections, ports evolved into maritime centers, that is bustling commercial and business centers to cater for the growth of national and international trade. Ports grew physically, while they concentrated services and businesses that were indispensable for the daily operation of shipping and trade, such as steamship companies, insurance agencies, migration and labour agencies, banks, consulates and embassies, suppliers, coal merchants and warehouses that synthesized the vivid maritime world of the port. However, not every port became a maritime center, nor every port was industrialized in the long 19<sup>th</sup> century. The study of ports has lately witnessed a revival, predominantly driven by historians of globalisation. However, the perception of ports as mere contact zones, as liminal places between the



sea and the land, between markets and civilisations leaves little room to explore the port city per se: the transformation of ports to adapt to the growth of the maritime sector and, vice versa, their transformative effect on the proper city, on its urbanization, industrialization and socio-economic infrastructure. The paper focuses on the development and operation of the port and the surrounding port district of Piraeus for a comprehensive understanding of the economic function of the port and its impact on the city. In terms of methodology, the paper pieces together trade and shipping statistics, censuses and fiscal sources for the demographic profile of the city as well as a detailed register of the services and businesses, the sea-related industries, port facilities and infrastructure drawing on city guides, almanacs and newspapers. Last, the paper will present a web-based GIS urban map PiraeusDigiMap that is constructed based on the above evidence. This urban database that is open access online, provides a visual, interactive mapping of the dynamic landscape of the port city of Piraeus in selected temporal layers between 1834 and 1914, and captures the extraordinary evolution of the port and its adjacent economic and residential zones. Piraeus-DIGIMAP allows users for the first time to follow the synchronized and intertwined development of the maritime and industrial zone of Piraeus, the integration of transport systems with the connection of shipping to the railway and road network, the expansion of port infrastructure to accommodate the ever-growing traffic of commodities and passengers; the expansion of the residential districts and their segregation upon the origin of settlers.

JORDI IBARZ GELABERT, University of Barcelona

### *Coastal Shipping on the Catalan Coast in the Transition from Sail to Steam, 1850–1900*

Coastal shipping along the Catalan coast during the second half of the nineteenth century has received only partial scholarly attention, usually framed within the general narrative of the impact of

railway expansion and the replacement of small traditional sailing vessels by steamships. This proposal aims to move beyond such a broad interpretation by examining the evolution of specific cases using the available statistical data. The objective is to analyse how certain ports and local trading routes adapted—or failed to adapt—to the technological and logistical transformations of the period. By drawing on long-term data series, the study will trace the continuity, reconversion, or decline of particular coastal shipping routes, paying attention both to changes in traffic volumes and to the types of vessels employed. The proposed approach will allow for a closer observation of the concrete dynamics of port communities, offering a more nuanced perspective on the interaction between railways, steam navigation, and local maritime economies. Rather than limiting the explanation to a simple substitution of transport modes, the aim is to understand the forms of resilience and specialization that characterized Catalan coastal shipping during this transition to maritime modernity.

**18:00 – 19:30** — **Keynote Lecture in Room I**

# Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> of May 2026

## ROOM 1

9:30 – 11:30

### SESSION I – Merchant Families, Maritime Networks and Associations

Chair: GELINA HARLAFTIS, University of Crete & Centre of Maritime History, Institute for Mediterranean Studies – FORTH

ALESSANDRO FLAVIO DUMITRASCU, Institute for South East European Studies of Romanian Academy

*The Malachis: a Merchant Family from Crete from the sixteenth century with Commercial Activities from the Black Sea to Venice*

Until now a single member of the Greek merchant family from Crete, the Malachis, was known, Cristodulo. This merchant, active in the first half of the sixteenth century, oriented his activity toward the wine trade, particularly, in the Black Sea region. If older scholarship found him in Constantinople, I found a document that attests him even at the mouth of the Danube. However, Cristodulo was not the first member of his family to be involved in the art of trade in this direction. Another document from the beginning of the sixteenth century discusses the commercial activity of Jani Malachi in Constantinople. Another Malachi, Nikolaos, was involved in trade with fish from the Black Sea, as well at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Similarly, Cristodulo, was not the last of his family: his son, Zorzi, also became involved in the wine trade, this time with Venice. The three generations' work of this family was

sufficiently productive to allow them to buy properties in the capital of Republic of Venice. The prosopography study of this family allows us not only to observe the rise of a Greek merchant family from Crete but also to consider the trade trends in a region that was considered to be not too profitable by earlier scholarship, the Black Sea. The commercial activity of the Malachis, consisting of selling wine and buying local merchandise from this region, allows them to orient their activities in a much more profitable area, the Venetian one.

SVITLANA ARABADZHY, Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History, University of Oslo & Institute for Mediterranean Studies – FORTH

### *From the Adriatic to the Sea of Azov: The Case of the Mimbelli Brothers in Maritime Trade through the Port of Mariupol*

This research investigates the contribution of shipowners and merchants from the Pelješac Peninsula to the growth of maritime trade through the port of Mariupol on the Sea of Azov in the nineteenth century. Based on archival materials from Ukraine, Croatia, and the United Kingdom, together with statistical records and contemporary press, it highlights the role of Austrian subjects in shaping maritime commerce. Using the example of the Mimbelli brothers, the study traces the establishment and expansion of trade in Mariupol, emphasizing the importance of family networks in enlarging the merchant fleet and the strategies that sustained their economic success. The research examines the shipping routes of Mimbelli vessels to identify the patterns behind the prosperity of their family enterprises. Finally, the paper addresses why Mariupol emerged as a significant hub for shipowners and traders from the Pelješac Peninsula during the “closed” phase of its history, as well as the internal and external economic and political factors that influenced commercial endeavors through the port of Mariupol.

MATEO BRATANIĆ, University of Zadar

*Maritime Society of Pelješac/Sabioncello, the leader of the East Adriatic shipping business (1865-1891) from boom to bust*

During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the transition from sailing ships to steamships was in full swing. Numerous Austrian (Austro-Hungarian) sailing shipowners were participating in global shipping trade reaching its apex in the early 1870s. While their business retained the form of kinship enterprise, some of the Austrian shipowners embarked upon setting up joint ventures that would facilitate the business and overcome the obstacles of the individual ownership. Amongst few such attempts was the Maritime Society of Sabioncello/Pelješac that had numerous investors who started the first stock company of sailing ships in Dalmatia. While they had every intention to spread to steamship business, political, financial, and business issues prevented them to do so. They managed to stay in shipping business until the early 1870s with positive balance with 33 vessels and a total capacity of 21000 tonnes, while in 1880s they were facing heavy losses and almost no income. This paper would analyse how one shipping company transferred from the old carati (share) system of ownership to the modern capitalist firm in the period of transition from sail to steam and what did it entail. This would be done by looking into their board of directors' meetings, balance sheets and the huge business correspondence with the agents around the world. Above that, it would be also the insight into the local politics that shaped the business strategies and personal relations of the owners that were often damaging for the Maritime Society of Sabioncello.

MARTIN BELLAMY, Glasgow Life Museums

## *The Business of Empires: William Burrell's Austro-Hungarian Shipping Interests*

On 21 May 1879 the Glasgow shipowner William Burrell sailed into the port of Fiume (Rijeka) aboard his new steamer Hungarian and was greeted by the town band playing God Save the Queen. The Hungarian government had invested heavily in Fiume to rival Trieste and desperately needed to attract trade. William Burrell was a small-time shipowner trading between Glasgow and the Mediterranean and seized on this new opportunity. After being feted for several days, he left with a partnership deal with the logistics entrepreneur Gottfried Schenker and a healthy subsidy from the Hungarian government. Schenker and Burrell quickly established the Adria Steamship Company and invested heavily in new ships. In 1881 the company was restructured to create the first steamship line under the Hungarian flag, but with Burrell still managing the fleet. His son William took on the business in 1885 and after being appointed consul he greatly promoted Austro-Hungarian commercial and cultural links in Glasgow. In 1895, Burrell and Schenker entered into a new partnership to create the Austro-Americana Line. Again they tapped into government subsidies. The new line was intended to capitalise on the growing demand for cotton in Austria-Hungary and established a service between Trieste and North America. Schenker provided the logistical support and Burrell the shipping expertise. This paper will investigate how a relatively unknown Scottish shipowner was able to establish two major Austro-Hungarian shipping lines. Burrell is used as a case study to understand how British companies capitalised on Austria Hungary's international trading ambitions by exploiting government subsidies. This interplay between the free-trade British Empire and the more protectionist Austro-Hungarian Empire offers an insight into the development of Mediterranean trade in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

**12:00 – 14:00** SESSION II – Transitions in Mediterranean Island Societies: Political, Economic, and Social Transformations (18<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)  
Chair: LEONARDO SCAVINO, University of Genoa

LUCA LO BASSO, University of Genoa

*Continuités et ruptures maritimes: la Corse entre Gênes et la France (1768–1789)*

Cette communication propose d'analyser la Corse comme un laboratoire de transition politique et maritime au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, à travers le passage de la souveraineté génoise à l'intégration progressive dans l'espace monarchique français après le traité de Versailles de 1768. Loin d'être un simple transfert territorial, cette cession mit en jeu une redéfinition profonde des structures portuaires, des institutions maritimes et des pratiques de navigation. En croisant les sources juridiques (traité, règlements royaux, édits sur le pavillon), les rapports administratifs (inspection de Chardon en 1785) et les rôles d'équipage conservés à Bastia, Ajaccio et Bonifacio, l'étude met en évidence une dynamique double. D'une part, la persistance des logiques héritées de l'époque génoise : petites unités de cabotage, enracinement local des patrons, poids décisif du Cap Corse dans la main-d'œuvre maritime. D'autre part, l'introduction de normes françaises visant à centraliser, fiscaliser et contrôler la mer par la création des Amirautés, l'obligation d'arborer le pavillon français et la standardisation des procédures portuaires. Cette tension entre continuité et changement illustre parfaitement la formule du Guépard : pour que tout reste, il fallait que tout change. La Corse du dernier tiers du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle apparaît ainsi comme un espace insulaire où se rejouent, à l'échelle locale, les enjeux méditerranéens de souveraineté, de fiscalité et de recomposition sociale. L'exemple corse permet d'interroger plus largement les modalités d'adaptation des sociétés insulaires méditerranéennes face aux mutations politiques et économiques de l'époque moderne.

ELEFThERIA ZEI, University of Crete

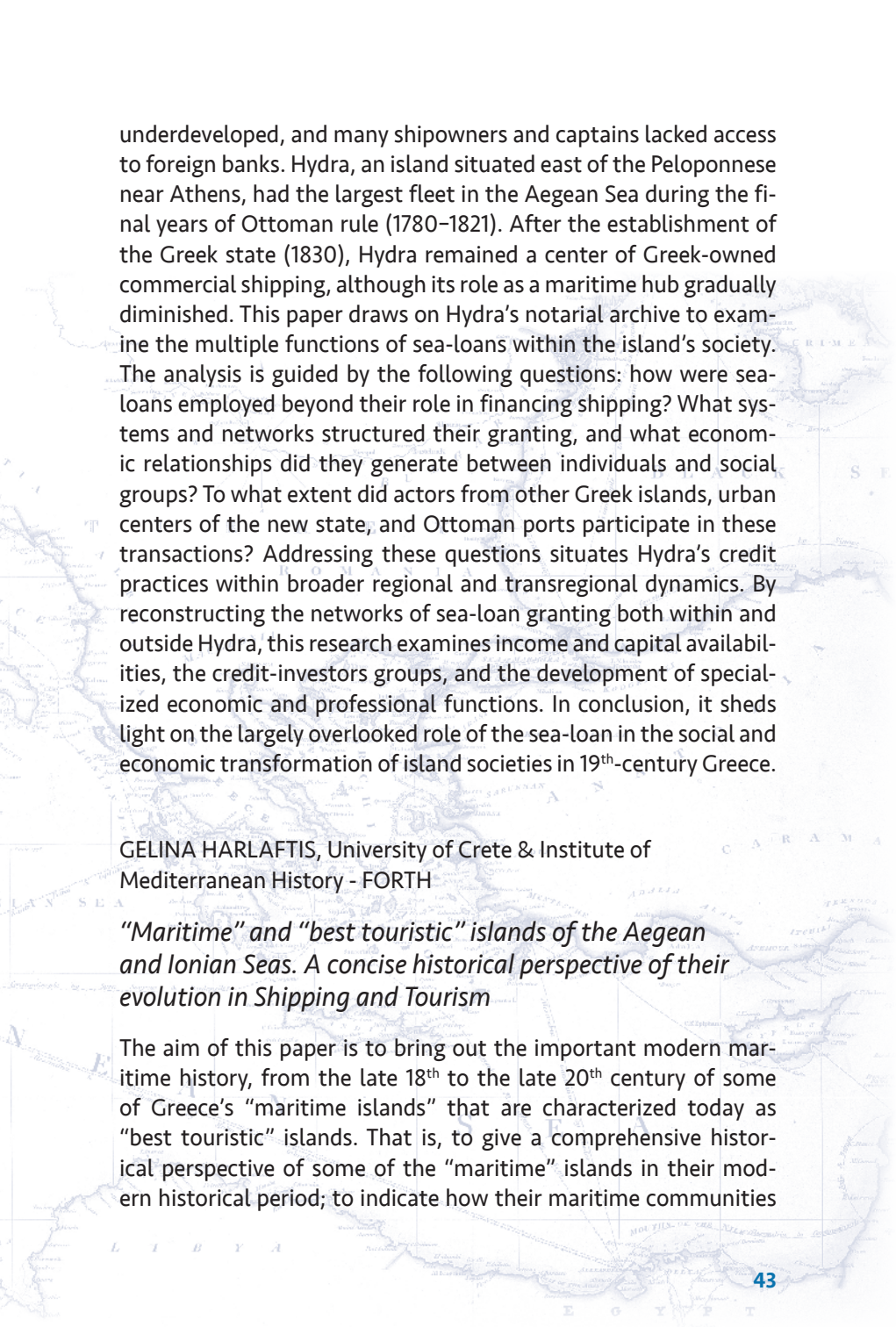
*Blood relations and social transformation in the Greek islands: the case of the Kairis “dispersed family” in the Greek Archipelago (Cyclades), 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries*

Around the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Revolution of 1821, powerful Orthodox or Latin families of the Cyclades are found to have branched out all over the Aegean and to the Asian littoral, where they had established political and social networks with the most important Greek and Ottoman centers, such as Istanbul and Smyrna, through their activities as merchants, members of foreign consulates or intellectual agents. The paper aims to enhance the previously limited understanding of the agency of family networking, particularly that of siblings, in the economic, social and intellectual transformations within the Ottoman-Greek Aegean during the end of 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The case of the Kairis family from the island of Andros presents a particular interest, by their life choices of celibacy and intellectual careers, and by their old-fashioned relations of patriarchal solidarities between siblings, while they created an area of political and intellectual influence uniting the Archipelago with the Ottoman Empire and the West.

MINAS ANTYPAS, University of Crete

*The sea-loan as a mechanism of economic and social transformation in a Greek-island society (Hydra) during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*

The sea-loan was a long-established financial instrument used by Greek-owned shipping to fund commercial voyages during the Ottoman period. It was deeply embedded in centuries-old Mediterranean legal and institutional practices related to maritime trade. In the decades following the establishment of the Greek state (1830), the sea-loan continued to be a crucial tool for financing maritime trade in a context where domestic banking institutions were still

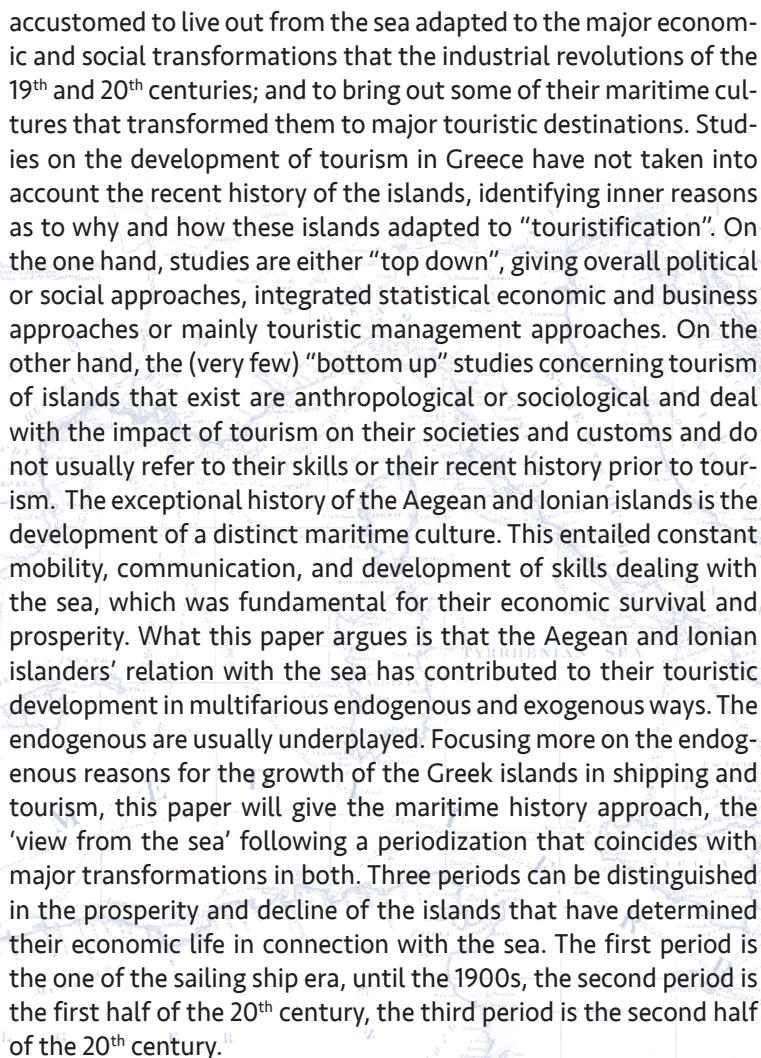
A faint, light blue map of the Aegean and Ionian Seas region serves as the background for the page. The map shows the outlines of Greece, Turkey, and the island of Crete, with various geographical labels in Greek and English. The text is overlaid on this map.

underdeveloped, and many shipowners and captains lacked access to foreign banks. Hydra, an island situated east of the Peloponnese near Athens, had the largest fleet in the Aegean Sea during the final years of Ottoman rule (1780–1821). After the establishment of the Greek state (1830), Hydra remained a center of Greek-owned commercial shipping, although its role as a maritime hub gradually diminished. This paper draws on Hydra’s notarial archive to examine the multiple functions of sea-loans within the island’s society. The analysis is guided by the following questions: how were sea-loans employed beyond their role in financing shipping? What systems and networks structured their granting, and what economic relationships did they generate between individuals and social groups? To what extent did actors from other Greek islands, urban centers of the new state, and Ottoman ports participate in these transactions? Addressing these questions situates Hydra’s credit practices within broader regional and transregional dynamics. By reconstructing the networks of sea-loan granting both within and outside Hydra, this research examines income and capital availabilities, the credit-investors groups, and the development of specialized economic and professional functions. In conclusion, it sheds light on the largely overlooked role of the sea-loan in the social and economic transformation of island societies in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Greece.

GELINA HARLAFTIS, University of Crete & Institute of Mediterranean History - FORTH

*“Maritime” and “best touristic” islands of the Aegean and Ionian Seas. A concise historical perspective of their evolution in Shipping and Tourism*

The aim of this paper is to bring out the important modern maritime history, from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century of some of Greece’s “maritime islands” that are characterized today as “best touristic” islands. That is, to give a comprehensive historical perspective of some of the “maritime” islands in their modern historical period; to indicate how their maritime communities

A faint, light blue map of the Aegean and Ionian islands is visible in the background. The map shows the outlines of the islands and the surrounding sea, with some labels like 'TRIPOLI' and 'GREEK ISLANDS' visible. The map is oriented horizontally and serves as a decorative background for the text.

accustomed to live out from the sea adapted to the major economic and social transformations that the industrial revolutions of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; and to bring out some of their maritime cultures that transformed them to major touristic destinations. Studies on the development of tourism in Greece have not taken into account the recent history of the islands, identifying inner reasons as to why and how these islands adapted to “touristification”. On the one hand, studies are either “top down”, giving overall political or social approaches, integrated statistical economic and business approaches or mainly touristic management approaches. On the other hand, the (very few) “bottom up” studies concerning tourism of islands that exist are anthropological or sociological and deal with the impact of tourism on their societies and customs and do not usually refer to their skills or their recent history prior to tourism. The exceptional history of the Aegean and Ionian islands is the development of a distinct maritime culture. This entailed constant mobility, communication, and development of skills dealing with the sea, which was fundamental for their economic survival and prosperity. What this paper argues is that the Aegean and Ionian islanders’ relation with the sea has contributed to their touristic development in multifarious endogenous and exogenous ways. The endogenous are usually underplayed. Focusing more on the endogenous reasons for the growth of the Greek islands in shipping and tourism, this paper will give the maritime history approach, the ‘view from the sea’ following a periodization that coincides with major transformations in both. Three periods can be distinguished in the prosperity and decline of the islands that have determined their economic life in connection with the sea. The first period is the one of the sailing ship era, until the 1900s, the second period is the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the third period is the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

15:30 – 17:30

**SESSION III – Maritime Labor and Naval  
Registration in the Mediterranean and beyond  
(XVIII-XIX)**

**Chair: MARTIN BELLAMY, Glasgow Life  
Museums**

ALKIS KAPOKAKIS, University of Crete, Institute for Mediterranean  
Studies – FORTH

*Maritime Labor Under Watch: The registry of Maritime  
workers in nineteenth century Greece*

From its earliest years, the establishment of a registry for maritime workers represented a key concern for the Greek state. The necessity to record and enumerate seamen, as well as all those engaged in maritime professions, extended beyond mere administrative purposes. It served a dual strategic role: on one hand, it aimed to stimulate and better organize maritime trade, a vital pillar of the new state's economic life; on the other, it sought to reinforce the Navy's reserves by providing a pool of experienced and battle-ready sailors in times of crisis. The organizational model for this registry drew upon the French system, known as the *système des classes*, along with its later adaptations, the *Inscription Maritime*. After several unsuccessful attempts at implementation, the Registry of Maritime Workers was finally established in 1861 under the supervision of the newly founded Seamen's Pension Fund, which itself was structured according to the operational model of the French, Caisse invalides del marine. From the very beginning, the registry proved indispensable for the effective functioning of the Pension Fund, which relied on the contributions of all seafaring workers serving on vessels flying the Greek flag. Beyond its administrative and financial role, the creation of the Registry introduced a new dimension to the maritime labor market in Greece, redefining the conditions for entry into the seafaring profession. The introduction

of mandatory registration and systematic recording of maritime workers' service at sea provided a crucial tool of oversight, not only for the Fund, but also for the state itself, which sought to exercise greater control over populations residing in coastal and island regions. This paper examines the implementation of the census model in Greece during the nineteenth century, while simultaneously seeking to highlight the internal logic of the institution and how it served both the shipping sector and the workforce it employed.

BRENDAN J. VON BRIESEN, University of Barcelona

*The Matrícula de Mar naval registration system and its application along the Spanish Mediterranean Coast (c.1737-1873)*

The victory of the Bourbon royal family in the Spanish War of Succession (1701-1715) would bring their implementation of a French-inspired naval registration system called the Matrícula de Mar. In addition to regulating naval matters, the Matrícula system also privileged certain types of labour and exchanged naval service for labour monopolies in the maritime trades (seamanship, fishing, naval construction, and cargo-handling). This system would undergo a number of reforms, but some functions would remain more or less constant – including those covering labour regulations through the guilds – until well into the nineteenth century. In this paper, I will look at the Matrícula as a hybrid (naval-labour) institution, and trace its modifications during a century and a half. I will also look at its liberalisation and abolition, and the major ramifications of these changes on the maritime trades. The sources used in this investigation include the regulations of the Matrícula system, official communications and proclamations, and guild records.

DAVID DOMÍNGUEZ, UNESCO Chair

*From the Mediterranean to the Caribbean: Matrícula de Mar, Socio-Labour Mobility, and Maritime Conflicts in Cuba (1776–1873)*

The introduction of the Matrícula de Mar (Seamen's Registry) into the overseas territories of the Spanish Empire in 1776 entailed the extension and adaptation of a legal and labour regime originally developed within the Mediterranean maritime sphere. This reform formed part of a broader Bourbon project aimed at the militarisation of maritime industries and the consolidation of imperial control over seafaring populations. In Cuba—an island with a deep-rooted maritime tradition, anchored in naval construction and repair within one of the largest shipyards established by European powers in the Americas—the implementation of the Matrícula de Mar provoked enduring tensions between the Naval Command and the economic interests of sugar planters and slaveowners. The Matrícula de Mar disrupted longstanding patterns of labour racialisation that had taken shape in port cities since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through the entrenchment of urban slavery. The limited but significant development of seafaring guilds within this new institutional framework enhanced the collective capacity of matriculados (enrolled seamen) to navigate and resist the transformations brought about by the capitalist modernisation of port governance after the 1840s. This paper examines how the Matrícula de Mar emerged as a key instrument through which colonial authorities sought to curb the influence of dockside foremen—many of whom were of African descent—and to advance a policy of labour whitening within urban maritime occupations. By tracing the main conflicts that shaped the evolution of the Matrícula in nineteenth-century Cuba, it explores the role of enrolled seamen within the maritime labour market of a plantation-based economy, and the broader dynamics of imperial governance, racial hierarchy, and labour control in the Atlantic World.

SANDA UGLEŠIĆ, University of Zadar & LUKA KNEZ, University of Zadar

### *The Establishment and Activity of the First Public Nautical School in Zadar (1850–1860)*

One of the most important economic activities in Dalmatia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was maritime affairs. The province lagged behind in following the trends of global maritime development. However, during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, certain positive developments occurred in shipping, trade, and nautical education. This was a period of economic growth in maritime activities, reflected in the large number of sailing ships and strong trade that extended beyond the Adriatic region. The development of maritime activities during this period led to a new approach in the education of seafarers, most notably through increased state involvement in the establishment of public nautical schools. The founding of public nautical schools in Dalmatia was initiated by a decree from Franz Joseph I in 1849, and several nautical schools were established in the province at that time. Among them was the Zadar Nautical School, which began operating in 1850. Its activities can be traced until 1860, when it was closed due to organizational issues and a low number of students. After its closure, for a long period there was no form of institutional maritime education in Zadar and its surroundings, which hindered professional advancement and access to higher-ranking maritime positions.

**18:00 – 19:30**    **Keynote Lecture**

***The Perils of Globalization: What the Fate of Mediterranean Shipbuilding Tells Us About Our World, and How It Came About***

ULF BRUNNBAUER, Professor of University of Regensburg & Leibniz-Institut für Ost- und Südosteuropaforschung (IOS)

# Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> of May 2026

## ROOM 2

9:30 – 11:30

**SESSION I – Experiences and Strategies in the Making of Otherness and Belonging Across the Maritime Spaces of the Premodern Mediterranean, panel 1**

**Chair: BENEDETTO LIGORIO, Sapienza University of Rome**

MIRKO SARDELIĆ, Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences

### *Fragile Worlds Afloat: Empathy and Emotional Practices on Mediterranean Ships, 1400-1600*

The paper examines both theoretical and practical approaches to researching empathy aboard, and in relation to, late medieval and early modern ships across the Mediterranean. The theoretical framework draws on the disciplines such as history of emotions, affective and sensory history, social history, and material culture to pose and begin to answer questions about emotional practices on board. These include: How was empathy expressed or expected within shipboard communities – among captains and their crews, merchants, pilgrims, enslaved or recently freed persons? Which emotional vocabularies were used to articulate fear, suffering, care, and solidarity at sea? How did cross-cultural encounters shape affective relations and empathetic responses? And to what extent were such relations and responses intensified by the ship's fragile, mobile, and confined environment?

GIUSEPPE ALBERTO PATISSO, University of Bologna

*Adriatic chains. Slavery and commerce between Apulia and Stato da Mar*

During the early modern period, a large slavery market developed in the Mediterranean linked to the confrontation between Christian-European states and the Ottoman Empire. Corsican warfare, naval clashes and Barbary markets were the main market of Muslim and African enslaved by the Christian powers. After the War of Candia, more and more enslaved people from the Balkans began to be sold at the markets of the Kingdom of Naples and they outclassed Africans enslaved. What had happened? This paper proposes to show the results of the doctoral research conducted in a peripheral territory of the Kingdom, Apulia, and the reconstruction of the economic and bureaucratic processes of what has been defined as the “Adriatic-Balkan slave trade”. From the capture in the hinterland to the merchants’ routes, this paper shows how enslaved people were introduced to the region, and aims to understand who they were, and who they became once converted. Once Muslim slaves arrived in Christianity, they found themselves experiencing a profound internal conflict of identity: were they still the same men and women that were captured on the other side of the Adriatic? Were they enslaved or free? Were they men or goods? Were they Christians or Muslims? Would they ever return to their old life? Through the story of Ignazio Molner, son of the slaves Yusuf and Fatima and who as an adult chose to recover his paternal surname, we will think about the sense of identity and belonging that enslaved and descendants felt once assimilated into Christian society.

FILomena VIVIANA TAGLIAFERRI, Deutsche Historische Institut in Rome and Kellogg College, University of Oxford

*The balance of acculturation: Managing the community life and the English nation of Livorno (late 17<sup>th</sup> century-early 18<sup>th</sup> century)*

The present contribution aims to examine, through a microhistorical approach, the various ways in which members of the English community in Livorno identified themselves between the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The role of the English nation in the port of Livorno became increasingly central during this period, thus contributing to defining Livorno as “the chief scale in the Mediterranean”. The ‘nazione inglese’ was characterised by a sense of autonomy, yet upon closer examination, it became evident that the nation was not as homogeneous internally as it appeared. In essence, endeavours were undertaken by the British community to secure acknowledgement of an expanding array of privileges. Indeed, the representatives of the nation frequently employed the Livornine laws established by Ferdinand I de Medici as a means of augmenting their own powers, thereby impeding the authority of the city authorities in the administration of all matters pertaining to their fellow countrymen. This is exemplified by the administration of the possessions of a deceased individual who has not executed a will, such as Dr Robert Alston in 1720. Conversely, however, evidence suggests that some members of the community experienced a dilemma between allegiance to their nation and the aspiration to assimilate into Livorno society, involved in what Danilo Pedemonte has defined as the ‘Mediterraneanisation’ of the English subjects living in the Tuscan port. In this process, religion was crucial, leading to a paradox in which the intermingling guaranteed by the privileges themselves generated transitions and often led to conflict between different authorities. This is the case of Maria Swetenham, an English Catholic girl who, in 1699, escaped from her mother and the community, which she perceived as conflicting with her lifestyle. The paper will therefore attempt to shed light on the difficult balance between the community’s self-referentiality and its acculturation in Livorno.

**12:00 – 14:00**    **SESSION II – Experiences and Strategies  
in the Making of Otherness and Belonging  
Across the Maritime Spaces of the Premodern  
Mediterranean, panel 2**

**Chair: ANTONIO IODICE, RomaTre University**

VALENTINA ŠOŠTARIĆ, University of Zadar

*Between Friends and Foes: Maritime Diplomacy in late  
Medieval Dubrovnik*

As a maritime city-state at the crossroads of East and West, late medieval Dubrovnik (Ragusa) depended on diplomacy as much as on seafaring. Situated on the eastern Adriatic coast and embedded in the wider Mediterranean basin, the city authorities paid much attention to carefully staged encounters with foreign political entities. These visits were not only moments of negotiation but also highly ritualized performances that communicated political and social hierarchies. This talk analyses the ceremonial dimension of sea diplomacy in Dubrovnik between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, focusing on the arrival, reception, lodging, and entertainment of diplomatic guests. From the allocation of prestigious residences such as the Rector's Palace, to shared meals and participation in public ceremonies, every detail conveyed messages of friendship or distance. Particular attention is given to the delicate role of women in these rituals, sometimes included as honoured guests yet strictly regulated in ways that highlight both their symbolic significance and the limits of their political roles. Hospitality, however, was never neutral. Welcoming one guest could risk offending another political ally. The paper therefore situates these practices within the broader concept of neutrality, a principle that Ragusan councillors increasingly invoked in dealings with competing powers across the Mediterranean. Neutrality was not mere abstention from conflict, but a consciously constructed position, constantly tested when the City authorities hosted the political

enemies of its friends. Hosting thus became a political act, simultaneously reinforcing bonds of friendship and maintaining distance. By studying diplomatic ritual in the maritime context of Dubrovnik as a port city, this study argues that the sea was not only a channel of communication but also a stage on which identities of friendship, otherness, and neutrality were negotiated.

LAVINIA GAMBINI, University of Bern

*Levantine Secrets: Claiming Artisanal Authority and Othering Migrant Knowledge in early modern Italy*

With ongoing Mediterranean warfare and confessional piracy, a growing number of non-Christian people from the Ottoman world were forcefully displaced to early modern Italy. While many were ransomed by their family members and eventually returned to their homelands, others were enslaved and went on to convert to Christianity, often hoping to improve their living conditions and (occasionally) achieve manumission. At the same time, members of Ottoman minority groups came to resettle across Italian port towns, where they acquired a settling, trading, and religious privileges. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, many of these diverse (in-)voluntary Ottoman migrants rebuilt themselves a new life, even achieving substantial financial success by joining Italy's ranks of artisans, craftspeople, and lay practitioners. My paper explores the ways in which migrants, captives, converts, and refugees from the Ottoman and broader Islamic world in early modern Italy articulated authoritative claims over foreign artisanal and scientific know-how to secure commercial privileges or defend their trade from the scrutiny of local authorities. By claiming to hold precious, rare, or exclusive 'secrets from the Levant', these migrant individuals not only presented their scientific and artisanal expertise as something worthy of being preserved and safeguarded but also placed the origins of their know-how outside the borders of (Western) Europe. In line with recent findings by Natalie Rothman (2011;

2021) who, however, has mostly focused on cross-Mediterranean scholars and translators, my paper suggests that migrant artisans from the Islamic world played an active role in shaping European notions of Islamicate and Asian skills, know-how, and craftsmanship. By doing so, they not only othered and exoticized their crafts and expertise but also co-shaped European artisanal/artistic categories such as 'alla levantina', 'damaschina', 'turchesca', or 'moresca' (in the Levantine/Damascene/Turkish/Moorish manner).

CAROLIN SCHMITZ, King's College London

*A tool for belonging and a risk of exclusion: The double-edge functionality of healing for marginalized people across the early modern Greater Mediterranean*

Healing, especially in the early modern period, was a practice of improvement that had a two-way street: it improved the health of the recipients of care, and the social status of those that offered the service. Yet, if things went wrong, it could also increase the suffering of the patient and be a source of potential danger for the practitioner. This paper will examine the multidimensional and intimate nature of healing and its potential as an analytical lens to study human behaviour within the dynamics of exclusion/inclusion, belonging, persecution, and acceptance in the early modern Mediterranean. Building on concepts that provide a larger interconnecting framework, such as the 'Atlantic Mediterranean' or 'Greater Mediterranean' proposed by Fernand Braudel and analytically reflected by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, or more recently Byron E. Hamann's 'Mediterratlantic World', and linked through a similar institutional framework (The Spanish and the Roman Inquisition), this paper brings together inquisitorial trial records against minoritized healers from the Canaries with those from other Mediterranean islands and coastal cities, to explore the interconnectedness of the larger maritime space. At the intersections of coercion and community, it will explore in particular the role of healing as part

of a set of strategies that enabled marginalized people to belong and integrate, but simultaneously put them at risk of being persecuted and excluded. A secondary aim of this paper is to take into consideration the maritime environment, as both a geographic setting and a medium through and in which healing, mobility and belonging took place. It asks, which impact did the particular setting of islands, coastal and port cities have on the politics and social practices of exclusion and inclusion more broadly?

**15:30 – 17:30**

**SESSION III – Maritime Production and Trade**

**Chair: THOMAS KALESIOS, Institute for  
Mediterranean Studies – FORTH**

ARISTEA GRATSEA, University of Crete

*Salt production and Trade in the Early Modern  
Mediterranean: The Cretan Salt-Pans (c. 1570-1645)*

This contribution presents the first historical research results of the research project “Salt in the Mediterranean: The case of the Cretan salt pans (c. 1570-1645), (Acronym: SALMed)”, funded by the Hellenic Foundation of Research and Innovation (H.F.R.I) under the 4<sup>th</sup> call to Support Post-Doctoral Fellows. The principal objective of this research project is to study the organization of salt pans and commerce of salt in Venetian Crete during the early modern period (c. 1570-1645). Salt was a fundamental commodity for food preservation and trade, shaping both economic strategies and political power. Venetian salt policy formed a cornerstone of the Republic’s economic system: by monopolizing and tightly regulating production and distribution, Venice sustained its prosperity and reinforced its dominance in the Mediterranean for centuries. Venice had limited local resources for salt production due to its lagoon environment. For this reason, the Serenissima relied heavily

on external sources in nearby regions where conditions were suitable for salt extraction. One of the most notable locations for salt production near Venice was Chioggia, an area in the southern part of the Venetian Lagoon. Except for Chioggia, other important location in the Venetian Stato da Mar was Peloponnese, Cyprus and Crete. The importance of the Cretan salt pans grew considerably after the loss of Cyprus in 1571, which had been one of the Republic's most significant salt-producing territories in the Venetian Stato da Mar. Within this framework, this presentation will focus on the organization and operation of the Cretan salt pans, as well as on the socio-economic and geographic profiles of the diverse actors involved in this sector – landowners and merchants, tax farmers and laborers. By examining these groups and their interactions, the project seeks to shed light on the economic networks, social hierarchies, and regional specificities that shaped salt production and commerce in Venetian Crete.

SABINE FLORENCE FABIJANEC, Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences

*The maritime wine trade (legal and contraband) in the Eastern Adriatic (late Middle Ages and early modern period)*

In the towns of the Eastern Adriatic, three types of production dominate: viticulture, cereals, and vegetable crops. While the commune's grain reserves are barely sufficient, wine production is abundant. Moreover, regardless of the political system in place, agriculture enjoys free development. As a result, it is possible to paint a virtually unchanged picture of wine production and trade throughout the Eastern Adriatic during the late Middle Ages and early modern periods. Customs records provide statistics on exports of barrels and casks of local and imported wines to other markets. Notarial acts are more comprehensive in describing fraudulent wine shipments. The Dubrovnik registers, in particular, provide interesting insight about the reasons for smuggling.

MILORAD PAVIĆ, University of Zadar

*Trans-Adriatic Maritime Trade of the East Adriatic Ports with Ancona in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century according to Croatian Maritime Regesta*

The 18<sup>th</sup> century was a period of significant changes in maritime trade conditions in the eastern Mediterranean and the Adriatic. The Venetian Republic, weakened after a series of wars with the Ottoman Empire, ceded key positions in Levantine maritime trade to its competitors. Even within the Adriatic, Venice was not immune to the economic and political pressures from its neighbouring states, which eventually led to a decree proclaiming free navigation in the Adriatic issued by Emperor Charles VI in 1717. In this changed environment, there was a growth of entrepreneurial activity in the imperial ports of Trieste and Rijeka, as well as the papal port of Ancona, which experienced a strong economic surge in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Confronted with this new reality, Venice liberalized its policy towards the eastern Adriatic ports, which, in turn, began developing their own maritime trade enterprises both in the Adriatic and the Mediterranean. In the increasingly interconnected maritime trade flows of the Adriatic during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, an important role was played by trans-Adriatic maritime trade between the eastern Adriatic ports and Ancona, as evidenced by numerous documents, among which the Croatian Maritime Regesta are particularly noteworthy. This paper aims to reconstruct the structure of the maritime trade network between the Eastern Adriatic ports and Ancona, with particular attention to the nature of the trade, depending on whether it was transit-oriented or domestic. The share of Eastern Adriatic ports in maritime trade with Ancona will also be analyzed, while further analysis will cover the structure of goods being traded and the types of ships involved in the exchange of goods, classified by their provincial or national affiliation. The study will also take into account other factors that contributed to the increasing significance of trade connections between the Eastern Adriatic ports and Ancona.

MARIJANA DLAČIĆ, Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences

### *Fishing in the Commune of Osor During the Last Two Decades of Venetian Rule*

Based on data about fishing net owners and the annual quantity and value of the catch, this paper will present the state of fisheries in the Osor commune during the final two decades of the Venetian Republic's rule, under which it had continuously been since 1409 until the Republic's fall in 1797. During this period, Venice pursued a restrictive fishing policy primarily aimed at securing its own commercial monopoly. It was only in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that Venice showed an interest in improving the state of its fisheries. By that time, however, it was already economically declining and lacked the strength to implement substantial reforms. On the other hand, the fishermen themselves were not interested in adopting innovations, as the existing fishing methods suited them well. Therefore, the data on fishing in the final two decades of the Venetian Republic's rule will show the state of the fisheries at the time of the Republic's collapse. The Venetian administration maintained registers of the owners of trate - large seine nets - introduced in the Osor commune in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century by the Ragusin and Botterini families from Veli Lošinj. In addition to them, other well-known families from Veli Lošinj are mentioned in the sources as owners of trate, as well as families from Mali Lošinj, Nerezine, and Susak. The annual catch records list the quantities and value of sardine and mackerel catches. This study was carried out as part of the project "Istria and Kvarner in the Era of Venice and Austria: Microhistorical Themes" conducted at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Pula.

**18:00 – 19:30    Keynote Lecture in Room I**

# Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> of May 2026

## ROOM 1

9:30 – 11:30

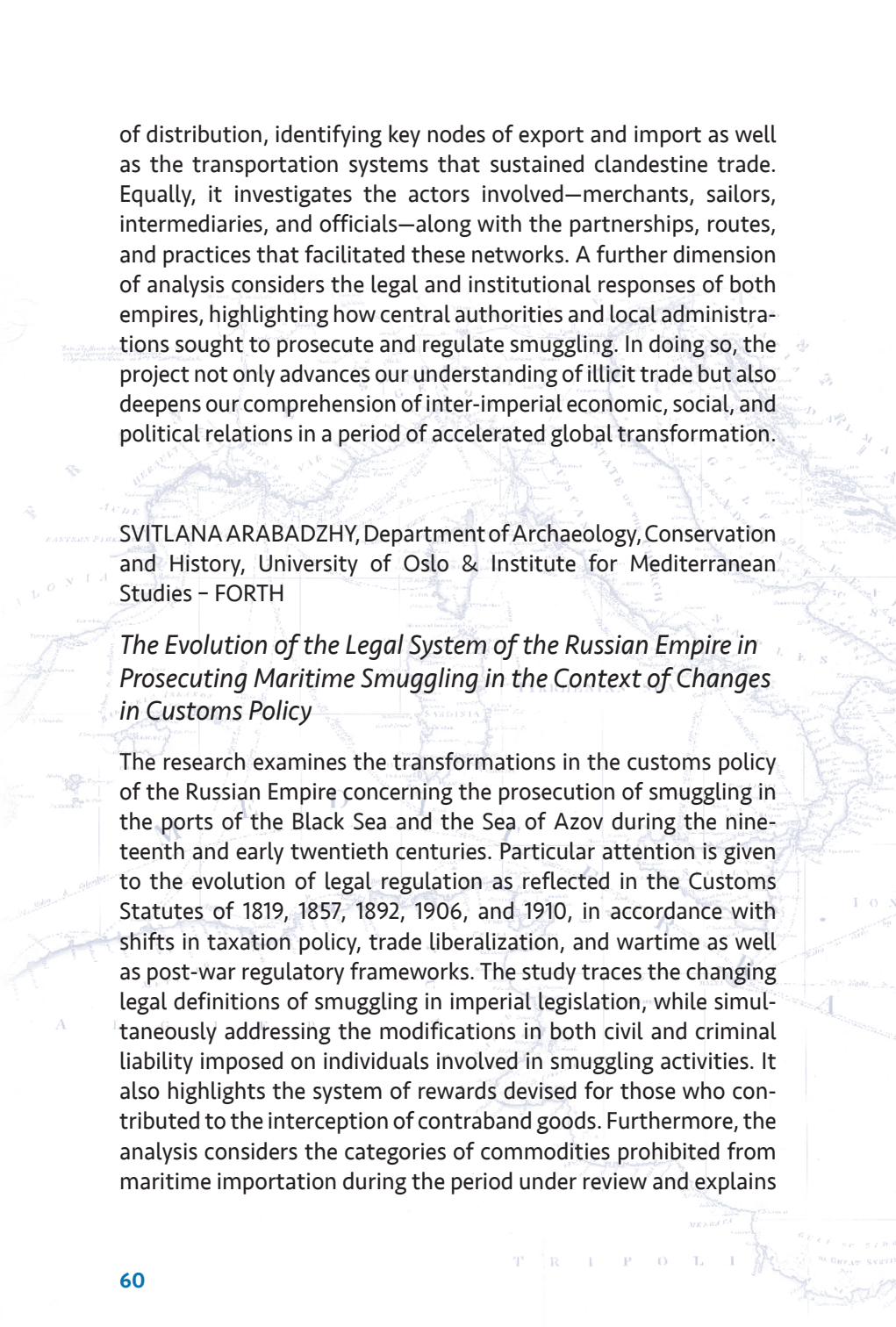
**SESSION I – STASH I: Illicit Networks and Imperial Entanglements: Maritime Smuggling in the Black Sea and Aegean (1850–1914)**

**Chair: MATEO BRATANIĆ, University of Zadar**

ANNA SYDORENKO, Institute for Mediterranean Studies – FORTH

*Shadow Trade: Unravelling Maritime Smuggling Between the Russian and Ottoman Empires (1853–1914)*

The ERC-funded STASH project investigates maritime smuggling between the Russian and Ottoman Empires during the transformative period of 1853–1914. Focusing on the Black Sea, the Sea of Azov, and the Southeastern Mediterranean, the project explores the illicit circulation of goods and people across port cities such as Odesa, Istanbul, and Alexandria. By situating smuggling within broader processes of globalization, the transition from sail to steam, and the restructuring of imperial economies, STASH moves beyond conventional geopolitical perspectives to illuminate the “shadow relations” that shaped inter-imperial interaction. The project examines smuggling not as a marginal phenomenon but as a crucial dimension of imperial relations at the heart of the Eastern Question, where Russian and Ottoman interests intersected with the influence of Western powers. It traces the macrostructures of smuggling networks, from hinterlands of production to forelands



of distribution, identifying key nodes of export and import as well as the transportation systems that sustained clandestine trade. Equally, it investigates the actors involved—merchants, sailors, intermediaries, and officials—along with the partnerships, routes, and practices that facilitated these networks. A further dimension of analysis considers the legal and institutional responses of both empires, highlighting how central authorities and local administrations sought to prosecute and regulate smuggling. In doing so, the project not only advances our understanding of illicit trade but also deepens our comprehension of inter-imperial economic, social, and political relations in a period of accelerated global transformation.

SVITLANA ARABADZHY, Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History, University of Oslo & Institute for Mediterranean Studies – FORTH

*The Evolution of the Legal System of the Russian Empire in Prosecuting Maritime Smuggling in the Context of Changes in Customs Policy*

The research examines the transformations in the customs policy of the Russian Empire concerning the prosecution of smuggling in the ports of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Particular attention is given to the evolution of legal regulation as reflected in the Customs Statutes of 1819, 1857, 1892, 1906, and 1910, in accordance with shifts in taxation policy, trade liberalization, and wartime as well as post-war regulatory frameworks. The study traces the changing legal definitions of smuggling in imperial legislation, while simultaneously addressing the modifications in both civil and criminal liability imposed on individuals involved in smuggling activities. It also highlights the system of rewards devised for those who contributed to the interception of contraband goods. Furthermore, the analysis considers the categories of commodities prohibited from maritime importation during the period under review and explains

the rationales behind the introduction and subsequent revision of restrictive lists. Finally, the study investigates the development of legislation governing the protection and control of maritime border zones, along with the reform of state institutions charged with suppressing the illicit import and export of goods.

THOMAS KALESIOS, Institute for Mediterranean Studies – FORTH

*The Aegean as a place of smuggling: the newly established Greek kingdom at the center of the trade routes of the eastern Mediterranean in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century*

The Aegean Sea was an important area for commercial activity and smuggling. The development of international trade routes and the geography of the region, with its many small islands, provided an ideal environment for such practices. The establishment of the Greek kingdom in 1830 changed the situation in terms of control and “preferred” products, but not necessarily in terms of routes. The islands near the coast of Asia Minor treated it as their hinterland, while extensive smuggling networks operated in the Cyclades islands, as well as on the coast of the Peloponnese. The important transshipment port of Syros plays a special role in this route, as a large number of legal and illegal goods are transported from there to other destinations. Another important route appears to be the one that starts from the shores of the Ottoman Empire and ends in Attica, with the aim of supplying the ever-growing urban center of Athens-Piraeus. The goods that were mainly traded, not only because of their commercial value but also because of the tense relations between Greece and the Ottoman Empire, were weapons, tobacco, cigarette papers, matches and salt, while the main smugglers were Greek Christian subjects of the empire. In this announcement, the main effort is to outline the above arguments through interesting, albeit fragmentary, Greek sources.

**12:00 – 14:00**    **SESSION II – STASH II: Strategies, Elites, and Contestations of Illicit Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean**

**Chair: BRENDAN J. VON BRIESEN, University of Barcelona**

MATTEO BARBANO, Institute for Mediterranean Studies – FORTH

*Steamships, Seafarers, and Smuggling: A Close-Up on Illicit Maritime Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean*


The paper investigates the relationship between the late-nineteenth-century expansion of steam navigation in the eastern Mediterranean and the flourishing of maritime smuggling. Focusing on the Austrian Lloyd, one of the region's leading shipping companies, it argues that the multiplication of steamship lines and the growing geographical reach of commercial routes created fertile conditions for illicit trade. Far from being a marginal activity carried out solely by external actors, smuggling often involved the seafarers themselves, who combined their regular duties with the clandestine movement of goods. The long-standing practice of *paccottiglia*—seafarers' own trade—had traditionally been recognised and safeguarded by Austrian maritime law as a legitimate source of supplementary income. Yet, in 1885, the Austrian Lloyd formally prohibited all private trade under its internal regulations, demanding exclusive service and loyalty from its crews. Despite this corporate attempt to suppress private trading, company records, including the so-called Black Book of disciplinary violations, reveal that smuggling persisted and even intensified. Evidence from 1900–1914 shows repeated cases of seafarers trafficking contraband goods, such as small arms, ammunition, and hashish, sometimes with the tacit approval of captains. The paper discusses how the very factors intended to strengthen the company's business—its vast network of steamship connections and the physical characteristics of its modern vessels, with their secluded spaces—together with the

company's own attempts to suppress previously common petty trading practices, paradoxically facilitated clandestine commerce. In doing so, it highlights how the infrastructures of modern steam navigation nurtured illegal circuits of exchange that intertwined with, and occasionally undermined, imperial and colonial controls.

EKIN MAHMUZLU, Institute for Mediterranean Studies – FORTH

### *Weapons of the Powerful: How Smugglers reshaped the Tobacco Monopoly and the Laws*

The power dynamics between smuggler and legal authority are central to understanding smuggling. Inspired by James Scott's *Weapons of the Weak*, some researchers view smuggling as resistance by the poor in informal settings. In contrast, others, following Hobsbawm's concept of social bandits, see smugglers as heroic freedom fighters. However, smugglers were not always powerless. In some cases, they were profit-driven entrepreneurs challenging legal authority. In this context, frontier studies suggest that smuggling often involves a struggle between powerful groups, a process of rule-making and boundary-making, redefining the game. This paper examines such a power struggle in the Ottoman Empire, focusing on the conflict between the Ottoman Tobacco Monopoly (Régie) and local merchants in Samsun and Trabzon. Established in 1883, the Régie sought to control tobacco production and trade. In 1886, the Régie began to monopolize the manufacturing of processed tobaccos and cigarettes; the tobacco merchants found ingenious ways to circumvent the control and avoid paying taxes. Subsequently, the Régie filed a legal case against three merchants for smuggling; the merchants fought back by hiring expensive lawyers and using their economic and political connections. Despite legal battles and attempts to undermine merchants, they eventually settled by paying some taxes but avoiding the full penalties. The Régie hoped to intimidate other merchants through these courts, but local resistance grew. The farmers in Samsun revolted against



Régie's local management with the help of local merchants, and some officers were arrested, which resulted in investigations and the replacement of local officers. New officers, often from influential merchant families, restored a tacit agreement that allowed merchants to pay a fair portion of taxes, while smuggling was reduced. Eventually, the Régie made a tacit agreement with the merchants. Ultimately, while the local merchant family members became managers in the local Tobacco Monopoly, the laws around smuggling were renegotiated after a series of conflicts in Samsun and Trabzon.

PETROS KASTRINAKIS, Institute for Mediterranean Studies – FORTH

*Across the Waves, Beyond the Law: Crete's illicit sea trade in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*

This paper explores aspects of illicit maritime trade in Crete during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While recent research has examined legal trade in Crete through European and, to some extent, Ottoman sources, smuggling has remained largely overlooked, in part because of the scarcity and difficulty of accessing relevant evidence. Research has shown that smuggling was a persistent phenomenon in Crete, taking the form of human trafficking and arms trade, but also involving everyday commodities such as salt and tobacco, whose status as state monopolies made them especially profitable targets of illicit exchange. Reports of smuggling from across the island, together with government measures aimed at its suppression, underscore the gravity of the problem. Smuggling both influenced and was shaped by the island's economic and political developments, from the Christian uprisings of the later nineteenth century with their heightened demand for arms, to the advent of the steamship, which expanded the means of transporting illicit cargo.

ABDULMENNAN M. ALTINTAŞ, Institute for Mediterranean Studies  
– FORTH

### *A Privileged Smuggler: Prince Ibrahim's Antiquities Trafficking from Rhodes to Egypt*

From the second half of the nineteenth century onward, the Ottoman government began to develop an awareness regarding the country's historical heritage and cultural assets. In this context, the empire's first museum was established in 1869, and laws were enacted to protect antiquities and regulate archaeological excavations. The 1869 law introduced certain restrictions on the trade and export of artefacts excavated from archaeological sites. With the 1884 Law of Antiquities, all antiquities were declared to be state property, and their trade and export abroad were strictly prohibited. In response to these measures, European museum directors, archaeologists, and antique dealers who for years had been exporting antiquities from Ottoman lands turned to illicit trade. In doing so, they collaborated with local antique dealers and influential figures within the empire. This paper presents a case study of antiquities smuggling by Prince Ibrahim, a member of the Egyptian Khedive family, who transferred artefacts from Rhodes to Alexandria. Following reports in 1899 and 1902 that the prince had smuggled antiquities from the Lindos Acropolis, the Ottoman government launched two investigations and eventually banned him from entering Rhodes. This case provides significant insights into how a privileged figure within the Ottoman Empire used his influence in smuggling activities, the methods employed to bypass port officials, and the international connections of antiquities traffickers.

# Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> of May 2026

## ROOM 2

9:30 – 11:30

SESSION I – Times of Uncertainty at Sea

Chair: ZRINKA PODHRAŠKI ČIZMEK, University  
of Zagreb, Catholic Faculty of Theology

WILLIAM S. BUBELIS, Washington University in Saint Louis

### *After Aigospotamoi: Spartan Maritime Power and the Sacred Wealth of Delos*

Sparta's victory in the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC) entailed a pivotal question: would Sparta maintain the very navy that had won that victory? A sensible answer would perhaps have been 'no.' The Athenians and their allies were in no position to resist, the Persians would no longer fund Spartan naval efforts once their common aims had been met, and there was no maritime danger from any other quarter. Even to support the oligarchies imposed upon Athens and its former allies by Sparta's admiral Lysander would require far fewer vessels. But a text (IG V [1] 1564) inscribed jointly between 403 and 400 BC by the Spartans and the people of Delos, whose island had been so crucial to Athenian power, provides unique and informative eye-witness testimony to the effect that Sparta did intend to maintain a significant naval presence in the Aegean. The inscription records several agreements between Delos and Sparta entailing that the Spartans would not interfere with the island's critical religious activities and so, by extension, that they

would not take any of the vast treasure accumulated there for religious purposes. The problem was that naval power was extraordinarily expensive, and Athens had likewise felt compelled to use sacred treasure for that very purpose. There would have been no need for such agreements as recorded in IG V [1] 1564 had not the Delians and Spartans both believed that the Spartan navy would indeed be operating extensively and need funds accordingly. Sparta's recognition of Delian independence nonetheless committed itself to supplying those needs through entirely different means even if its naval forces would nominally serve to guarantee that independence.

NABIL AL-TIKRITI, University of Mary Washington

### *The John Elphinstone Papers and the 1770 Battle of Çeşme*

In July 1770, the Russian Baltic Sea fleet defeated an Ottoman fleet in the Aegean Sea between the coast of Çeşme and the island of Chios. The Russian maritime intervention was supported by Greek fighters who might be classified as proto-nationalist leaders, and was partially commanded by an English mercenary named John Elphinstone. The Ottoman side, meanwhile, was commanded by an eccentric Georgian admiral named Cezayırlı Hasan Paşa who won some fame for his love of domesticated lions. This battle took place as part of the 1768-1774 Russo-Ottoman war, a decisive Russian victory which transferred parts of the Northern Caucasus, Crimea, and Southern Ukraine from Ottoman to Romanov control. The war ended with the 1774 Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, which scholars have long considered a turning point in Ottoman diplomatic history, largely because the two signatory empires traded protector status, with the Russians claiming that status over Ottoman Orthodox Christians and the Ottomans claiming the same status over Russia's Muslim populations. In my presentation, I intend to examine the role that Captain John Elphinstone played in these events by summarizing and analyzing his memoirs and related documents.

His papers provide an eyewitness perspective of the diplomatic, military, and political intrigues surrounding the war in general, and the Battle of Çeşme in particular. More broadly, I intend to explore some of the larger legacies of this war on Russian-Ottoman relations, the progressive expansion of Russian sovereignty southwards in the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the emergence of an independent Greece, and the contemporary relevance of these events to the international relations of Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region. This presentation is part of my broader research agenda to assemble a scholarly analysis of his memoirs and what they tell us about his role in the 1770 Russian expedition.

APOSTOLIS TONTI, University of Crete - Institute for Mediterranean Studies – FORTH

### *Doing business in wartime. Greek tramp shipping and the Entente Allies during the Great War (1914-1918)*

The unprecedented needs of the front for people and supplies, during the First World War, required every available means of transport, and all maritime powers played a role, whether they actively participated in the war or not. The dependence of Allied countries on neutral shipping for the carriage of their commercial requirements was enhanced by the demands made upon Allied tonnage for purely war purposes and became a big part of the shipping problem created by the war. Greek shipping operated like the other neutrals, under free market conditions (from 1914 until 1917) and after a blockade of Greece and the detention of ships in Allied ports in December 1916, starting by the first months of 1917, the majority of the Greek ocean-going fleet was time chartered by the Entente Allies, and put in their service. The period of the First World War is associated with an unprecedented growth of Greek merchant shipping but at the same time with the destruction of most of its fleet, until the Armistice of 1918. The Greek steam driven fleet reached its peak in the first year of the Great War numbering about 430 steam ships (over 100 grt) of total capacity of almost 900.000 grt (about 2% of world

shipping). The overwhelming majority of the total capacity, consisted of general cargo steamers (with 230 of them being ocean going - above 2000 grt), which were employed in international tramp shipping. The Greek fleet of freighters was specialized in the transport of dry bulk cargo, necessary to the war economy, and therefore proved extremely profitable for their owners. Tramp shipping is by nature adjustable to varying requirements of trade and neutral was the winner during the war and immediately after (the high prices lasted for 2 more years after the war).

HARUKO HOSODA KAWASE, Nihon University, College of Commerce

### *The Mediterranean as a Diplomatic Arena: Spain's Role at the End of the Cold War*

During the 1980s, Spain experienced a significant transformation in its international role by redefining the Mediterranean as a strategically vital maritime region. Following its accession to NATO in 1982 and the European Community in 1986, Spain consolidated its position as a Western ally while managing complex diplomatic relations in the Mediterranean, historically a key area for military and political maneuvering. Since the 1960s, the Soviet Union expanded its presence near Spanish waters by using ports close to the Canary Islands and the Strait of Gibraltar for fishing, compelling Spain to balance prudence and pragmatism in its foreign policy. Spain maintained a traditional pro-Arab stance aligned with some Soviet Middle Eastern policies, while restricting US military base usage to protect its sovereignty. At the same time, Madrid pursued cooperative initiatives with North African states on energy, fisheries, and counter-terrorism. After the 1975 Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), where Mediterranean issues were sidelined, Spain coordinated preparatory meetings from 1980 to 1983, contributing to the establishment of a Mediterranean security cooperation framework (CSCM). This reflected Spain's ambition to act as a mediator between East and West, and North and South, positioning itself as a middle power capable of

bridging regional divides. This study aims to explore how Spain's Mediterranean strategy during the late Cold War redefined maritime diplomacy and fostered a cooperative regional identity. By analyzing official documents, diplomatic records, and scholarly literature, the research contextualizes Spain's role within broader geopolitical shifts. Moreover, Spain's experience remains relevant today, as highlighted in the 2025 G7 Foreign Ministers' declaration emphasizing maritime security, rules-based order, and freedom of navigation. Understanding Spain's historical diplomacy offers important lessons for current efforts to maintain stability and cooperation in geopolitically sensitive maritime zones.

**12:00 – 14:00** **SESSION II – Power Projections and Diplomacy in the Mediterranean**

**Chair: MAJA PERIĆ, Croatian Institute of History**

JELICA VUJOVIĆ, Institute of History Belgrade

*Participation of Capitano del Golfo and Provveditore generale da Mar in the government of The Republic of Venice in Kotor (1420–1573)*

The Republic of Venice considered the Adriatic Sea its own Gulf, which left its marks on the titles of the functions of Venetian dignitaries, as well as in the vocabulary of the administrative apparatus in general. In that sense, the admiral based in Kotor (Cattaro), who was responsible for overseeing the entire Adriatic basin, had the title Capitano del Golfo. In 1420, on behalf of the doge and the Republic of Venice itself, the insignia of authority in Kotor was taken over by the Captain of the Gulf, Pietro Loredan. The Captain of the Gulf was subordinate to Provveditore generale da Mar, whose base was on Corfu. It was the official title of the supreme commander of the Venetian fleet, while after the outbreak of a war, command

and authority passed to Capitano Generale da Mar, whose powers were broader. Both officials are often found in sources about Kotor from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century, stored in the State Archives of Venice. Therefore, we consider that, in addition to their primarily military and naval duties, it is crucial to point out their engagement in Kotor and in connection with Kotor, as well as out of the war, since the frequency of such data in the original materials is not negligible. Considering that Kotor was located in a sensitive border area towards the Ottoman Empire, with a goal to save its international and diplomatic position, the central government in Venice sometimes employed Capitano del Golfo and Provveditore generale da Mar, in order to keep the situation there under control. By citing such examples from the sources, we will seek to substantiate these assumptions.

NIKOLA MARKULIN, Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences

*Logistical considerations of Venetian amphibious operations in the East Adriatic Theatre of Operations (1645–1718)*

During the last three Venetian–Ottoman wars – the Cretan War (1645–1669), the Morean War (1684–1699), and the Second Morean War (1714–1718) – the East Adriatic became the stage for repeated Venetian amphibious operations. From the attack on Klis (1648) and Bar (1649) to the assault on Herceg Novi (1687), the battles in the Neretva River delta (1694), and the attacks on Ulcinj (1696, 1718), Venetian commanders repeatedly sought to combine naval mobility with land offensives against Ottoman strongholds. This paper examines the logistical dimension of these undertakings, focusing on how supplies, transport, and coordination between naval and land forces shaped the course and outcomes of amphibious warfare. By analyzing well-documented operations, the study highlights the advantages and limitations of maritime supply networks in contrast to the difficulties of sustaining inland campaigns in the rugged Dalmatian and Montenegrin hinterlands. Beyond the

operational level, the paper asks whether Venetian reliance on amphibious assaults was primarily a product of strategic imperatives – securing ports and sea lanes consistent with a maritime empire – or whether it was dictated above all by logistical constraints on overland campaigning. In doing so, it places the Adriatic theatre in a broader discussion of early modern Mediterranean warfare, showing how the interaction between sea power, geography, and logistics influenced Venetian strategy.

OKCAN YILDIRIMTÜRK, Freie Universität, Berlin

### *The Reorganisation of the Province of the White Sea in 1849: Towards an Ottoman Mediterranean*

This presentation examines the Ottoman efforts at insular reform and the assertion of fluid territoriality in the Eastern Mediterranean during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Focusing on the Ottoman reorganisation of the Province of the White Sea in 1849, it explores the development of its two main objectives: first, reforming the Aegean islands and Cyprus into a unified insular space as a maritime administrative region, and second, asserting effective sovereignty across the maritime frontier with Greece by reorganising naval patrols and surveillance mechanisms around these islands. The study follows the province's first governor, Musa Safveti Paşa, on his inspection mission from Istanbul through the islands of Lesbos, Chios, Kos, Rhodes, and Cyprus. In terms of sources and perspective, it is based on a comparative discursive analysis of administrative guidelines and public announcements prepared in Istanbul, collective petitions written by locals in response, and the reform memorandum submitted by the Pasha upon his return to Istanbul. Particular attention is given to the Pasha's memorandum to offer critical insights into how he defined Muslim and Christian islanders through a discourse of productivity, how he experienced the island environments at both material and perception levels and finally, how he proposed to recreate the islands and the archipelago through infrastructure projects, land colonisation, and population transfers of

Arab and Kurdish groups. The potential contribution is multifaceted. First, the presentation moves beyond Eurocentric assumptions that consider the eastern Mediterranean as a passive recipient of, rather than a producer of, modernity. Second, it sheds light on the understudied Ottoman-Greek maritime zone, which has often been overlooked due to the terrestrial focus of frontier studies in the existing literature. Ultimately, it challenges the conventional view of the Ottoman state as an exclusively continental empire, highlighting instead its sustained engagement with the maritime world.

DANIEL F. BANKS, Scuola Superiore Meridionale, Naples

*A Floating Revolution: insurgent politics, the sea and the changing face of the Western Mediterranean, 1850–1875*

This presentation will develop the concept of “Floating Revolution” to compare and connect instances in which maritime activity played a key role in revolutionary events in the Western Mediterranean from the 1850s to the 1870s, as a transnational community of political radicals developed innovative ways of using the Mediterranean’s maritime networks of transport and commerce to unleash and support insurgencies around the sea’s shores. The effects of this activity, in which radicals sometimes collaborated with more moderate political actors, included the creation of a liberal Kingdom of Italy in 1861, the temporary overthrow of the Bourbon monarchy in Spain between 1868 and 1874, and the consolidation of the French Third Republic, and its rule over Algeria, in the 1870s. The presentation examines the ways in which revolutionaries acted, through the sea, to bring about institutional collapse or support insurgent armies and governments. Such activities included the clandestine movements of agitators and written materials, the shipment of weapons and military equipment, and even the transfer of large contingents of transnational armed volunteers from different locations to revolutionary hotspots. At the same time, these “Floating Revolutions” were wrapped up in the changing nature of port-cities and maritime transport in an expanding age of steam and in a Mediterranean world

whose North-South relations became increasingly colonial in nature. The paper will thus highlight how seafaring revolutionaries were engaged in expanding the frontiers of colonisation and steam-powered travel and production at the same time at which they advocated for increasing political freedom and democratisation for Europeans. Focusing on these “Floating Revolutions” changes perceptions of the nineteenth-century Mediterranean, by bringing to the fore the many ways in which the sea connected different contexts and processes of state-building, industrial and commercial expansion, and settler colonialism.

**15:30 – 17:30**

**SESSION III – Perspective and Views, Travels and Contacts in the Mediterranean**

**Chair: SVITLANA ARABADZHY, Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History, University of Oslo & Institute for Mediterranean Studies – FORTH**

FILIP BUDIĆ, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

*Beyond Myth: Eastern Adriatic and Seafaring in Apollonius' Argonautica*

The *Argonautica*, a celebrated epic poem from antiquity, was composed by the Alexandrian scholar Apollonius Rhodius in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. The poem recounts the well-known Greek myth of Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece, the Argonauts' voyage to Colchis, and their subsequent return. In contrast to his predecessors, Apollonius provides a detailed account of the voyage, situating it within the geographical context of the Black Sea and the central and eastern Mediterranean. While primarily mythological, many sections pertaining to navigation appear to be grounded in actual maritime experiences. The epic poem stands also as one of

the earliest valuable sources concerning seafaring in the eastern Adriatic. Its descriptions of navigation along Istria and Dalmatia are particularly intriguing, suggesting that the author drew upon earlier pilot books or direct maritime knowledge. The main goal is to concentrate on the navigational details within *Argonautica*, comparing them with data from other Greek pilot books, notably Pseudo-Scylax's "Periplus" (4<sup>th</sup> century BC), as well as later ancient pilot accounts. Modern nautical observations are also considered. The analysis focuses on voyage timing, landscape descriptions, and meteorological features, with the aim of discerning the factual nautical elements interwoven within the mythological narrative.

RANIA MOHAMMAD, University of Zadar

*Pleas and Complaints of Ragusan Merchants in Alexandria: Uncovering the Economic Realities of the Mamluk-Ottoman Transition through Arabic Documents in Dubrovnik and Zadar Archives*

This paper investigates the maritime and commercial relations between Egypt and Ragusa (Dubrovnik) during the late Mamluk and early Ottoman periods, situating them within the wider Mediterranean networks that connected peoples, ports, and empires. Focusing on newly identified Arabic documents from the archives of Dubrovnik and Zadar – including petitions, letters, and decrees exchanged with Sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī (1501-1516) – the study examines Ragusan merchants' activities around the sea, particularly their efforts to establish a consulate in Alexandria, and the grievances they expressed regarding commercial privileges. These sources also illuminate the institutional and administrative frameworks that shaped maritime interactions because of the sea: consular negotiations, port governance, and the regulation of international trade in Alexandria as a port city at a moment of geopolitical transition following the Portuguese discovery of the Cape of Good Hope. By bringing to light these understudied Arabic archival materials, this paper enriches our understanding of the Mamluk state's

economic policies, the continuity and transformation of port-city practices in Alexandria, and the place of Ragusa in early sixteenth-century maritime diplomacy. It thus contributes to broader discussions about the sea, showing how commercial petitions and consular negotiations reveal both the pragmatism and the vulnerability of Mediterranean societies.

BENEDETTO LIGORIO, Sapienza University of Rome

### *The Ragusa/Dubrovnik's perspective on the Mediterranean in the European Renaissance*

This research aims to present an in-depth study of Ragusa's perspective on the Mediterranean, through its vast network of Republic consulates located throughout the states of the Italian Peninsula in particular and throughout the rest of the Mediterranean. The Republic of Ragusa's vast consular network, as extensive as that of the Venetian Republic, intersected with the Republic of Ragusa's commercial networks, offering a comprehensive perspective on Mediterranean trade, insurance levels, and the information that circulated alongside goods. The Republic of Ragusa alone, recalling Fernand Braudel, provides a perspective on the entire Mediterranean during the Renaissance. Visualizing trade networks, trade, the value of goods, the cultural connections that pass through goods, the connections between Greek merchants and shipowners, Ragusan merchants and shipowners, and markets in Italy, the Balkans, and the Middle East, allows us to clearly see the development of an advanced, proto-capitalist mercantilist economy, and at the same time the level of cross-cultural encounter between connective interests that transcended religious identities and national borders in the nascent market economy. Methodology: Prosopographies, quantitative analysis graphs, and extensive use of SNA will be presented to fully understand Mediterranean commercial development through the perspective of Dubrovnik. Focus: the aim is to visualize the development of the market economy through Dubrovnik and to understand the cross-cultural encounter on a quantitative and qualitative perspective.

EMINE ESRA NALBANT, Binghamton University

### *The Journey of Late Ottoman Lighthouses*

Between the 1820s and 1870s, steamship technology compressed maritime distances and dramatically intensified traffic across the Mediterranean. This acceleration of circulation demanded new infrastructures of coastal safety, transforming the seascape of the Ottoman Empire. Lighthouses, together with hydrographic surveys, nautical charts, and optical innovations, became crucial nodes in this infrastructural web. This paper examines the nineteenth-century transformation of Ottoman lighthouses from architectural structures into standardized technological objects through the adoption of optical lenses. It situates this process within the rise of late Ottoman Mediterranean port cities, where expanding maritime trade required both practical navigational aids and new urban infrastructures such as quays and railroads. By focusing on lighthouse construction alongside hydrographic mapping and the standardization of optical apparatus, the paper highlights the integration of Ottoman coastal safety systems into global maritime networks. I argue that in the Mediterranean, lighthouses functioned as “operational seascapes”: infrastructures that bridged maritime and urban environments, facilitated the circulation of capital, and enabled the emergence of cosmopolitan Ottoman port cities. By tracing their material and technological histories, this paper positions Ottoman lighthouses not merely as local aids to navigation but as central actors in a nineteenth-century transformation that linked land, sea, and empire across the Mediterranean and beyond.

