Panel Proposal for Section 8: Modern Jewish History  
(Brandl, Podhraški Čizmek, Mancuso)

Panel Title:  
**Project for a new research area: Maritime trade from the Eastern and Western Adriatic to the Mediterranean - Jews, merchants and travelers in the 18th century inter-religious trade.**

The panel proposes a new study project that starts from the 16,000 documentary sources of the "Croatian Maritime Regesta, 18th century" by Nikola Čolak published in three volumes (Padova 1985 and 1993, Split 2017) and outlines the main lines for the transcription and publication of further 80,000 maritime archival documents already identified and marked, from which we can deduce a new perspective on the history of Jews during the eighteenth century, starting from the Adriatic to map the most varied routes across the Mediterranean.

The project is divided in three different sections: connections and collaborations between different Universities and Institutes on the both coasts of the Adriatic (primarily for the transcription of the documents), then between small entities scattered throughout the territory (i.e. Jewish or maritime museums) and finally organization of forum and symposiums 1-2 times a year where scholars from both sides of the Adriatic can meet and compare the results of new studies. Those conferences will be organized in aforementioned small localities along the Adriatic coast in Italy and Croatia.

An important part of the project is the work already accomplished in the last 3 years as preliminary tests to analyze the relevance and validity of studies for Jewish history and beyond. Here we have 544 new documents as the result of this preliminary research.

Another important filter and analysis tool is the methodology used and created "ad hoc" not only as an initial approach to the first 16,000 documents published but in anticipation of the whole project including 100,000 in collaboration with Piergabriele Mancuso from The Medici Archive Project.

The panel intends to present the project and the collaboration of three researchers in the mapping a new historical reality that concerns Jewish history as an active component of Adriatic and Mediterranean living among a multitude of peoples and nations that were denoting an incredible entrepreneurial vivacity based on the family and commercial ties of old and new Jewish families.
Regesti Marittimi Croati as a Source for Jewish History
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This is the presentation of the research of the Croatian Maritime Regesta – the 18th Century as a source for Jewish History. They consist of 3 published volumes with 16,000 documents from different collections of the Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Archivio di Stato di Ancona and Archivio di Stato di Fano. They tell the story of the Venetian Republic at the 18th century Adriatic.

Among different researches planned in the project, this one analyzes Jewish role in the 18th century maritime trade. Analyzing these documents, we were able to find 544 documents that mention Jews of different origin and in different roles. The real life of factual 18th century Jews emerges with their names and surnames, often also with their fathers’ names. Sometimes they are specifically Jewish, sometimes not. They are subjects of Republic of Venice, the Papal State, the Austrian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and the Republic of Dubrovnik. They can be merchants, agents, owners of merchandize or ships (parcenevoli and paroni), bankers, public figures (sensali), sometimes even captains. When they own ships, these ships have very recognizable names.

There are several levels of analysis that we applied to this data: starting, transit and final destination ports (ex, in, and versus), types and quantities of merchandise, types of ships, names of captains, and role Jews had in these enterprises.

We reconstructed specific roles Jews had in the maritime trade, trade routes, trade and family networks and connections. They travel and trade within the Adriatic itself, as well as Mediterranean and in Northern seas as far as Norway or Russia.

We can conclude that 544 new mentions of the Jews in the Regesta, add a lot of new data, therefore this project adds to our understanding of Jewish involvement in the Maritime trade.
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The project of transcription and publication of the “Croatian Maritime Regesta of the 18th century” was started by late prof. Nikola Čolak in the 1956. The result of his 40 years in different archives of Italian and Croatian ports are documents microfilmed and saved in the Croatian State Archives of Zagreb.

The whole project expects a multilevel work that include different phases.

The first phase was two years long analysis of the first 12,000 published documents to see if there were sources for Jewish history. More than satisfactory results opened new windows to the history of 18th century Jewry. They were presented at an international conference “The Birth and Evolution of the Venetian Ghetto”, organized in Venice for the 500th anniversary of the Venetian ghetto.

After the publication of the third volume of the “Regesta”, with another 4,000 sources, in 2017, edited by the author of this paper at the University of Split, we started our collaboration with Piergabriele Mancuso of The Medici Archive Project regarding the research methodology of so huge number of documents and providing a reliable database.

The second phase included establishing connections with scholars from Universities and Institutes in Italy (Bologna, Venice, Trieste) and in Croatia (Zagreb, Split, Pula, Zadar and Dubrovnik) interested in transcription and publication of another 80,000 documents from the archives with a pyramidal system for the manufactural part of the transcribing, and a call to museums interested to join the project hosting the symposia and revitalizing their exhibitions.

The third phase is planning symposiums and conferences after and during the publication of the “Regesta” (a plan is to publish another 13 volumes) allowing participants to share results from the researches not only from the “Regesta” but also from other and different primary sources.

The final result of the project is uploading on its online site all the documents “in regesto” and the original “in extenso” to be consulted by the international scholars’ community.
Regesti marittimi croati, contents and methods: from general to specific

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Focusing and mainly dealing with documents of maritime-commercial nature produced in the context of eastern-western 18th century Adriatic trade, Regesti marittimi croati is in fact a largely unexplored and for the time being also a mostly untapped source of information. Far from being completed, its current 16,000 documents represent only a portion of a numerically much bigger, thematically and geo-chronologically much wider mine of information.

Getting specific information from a general archive (as Regesti marittimi croati in fact are, in spite of their economic-trading focus) is an extremely taxing task. The degree of serendipity intrinsic to such type of research, however, can drastically be reduced by singling out from each document the most relevant metadata and crisscrossing the pieces of information they provide.

A similar approach was adopted for the study of documents of Jewish/Hebrew nature making up the Medici archives in Florence and in the making of BIA (Building Interactive Archives), a digital platform containing documents produced by the Medici court (Mediceo del Principato collection, stored in the National Archive in Florence), between the mid-16th and mid-18th centuries. What at first seemed to be scattered and separated tesserae of a very unclear mosaic, had eventually started getting interconnected so as to reveal stories of Jews who had been in contact with the court, who played a crucial role in the making of the Medici state.

Similarly, is now being done with the Regesti documents. After general scrutiny of all extant documents it was possible to connect into a single historiographical narrative a number of apparently unrelated documents, unveiling previously unknown stories of travelling and non-travelling Jews, letting coming up to surface biographical Jewish profiles and reconstructing genealogical ties until today completely unknown.