



This is the title of your abstract for the 13th Scientific FORTH Retreat

Yannis Spyropoulos ^{1#}

¹ Principal Researcher, IMS/FORTH

Presenting author: Yannis Spyropoulos, email: spyropoulos@ims.forth.gr, spyropoulosy@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The aim of JANET is to study the formation and functions of Janissary economic and political networks in the 18th- and early 19th-century Mediterranean. By focusing on the commercial, political, and financial interaction between Muslim communities in the above-mentioned region, the project challenges the dominant stereotypes about Islam which perpetuate the idea of Muslim economic idleness in the early modern era. The JANET research team studies, for the first time, the Janissaries not as a military corps, but as a privileged social group forming a complex of financial and political networks. It connects understudied areas – such as North Africa – with a number of other Mediterranean, Black Sea, and Danubian regions and, finally, utilizes an elaborate network analysis for disclosing system-level patterns and micro-level behaviors in this vast territory.

JANET introduces three different levels of network analysis (local, imperial, and Mediterranean) while focusing on a number of Ottoman port-cities in the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and by major rivers with considerable sea-faring activity. Its research is based on archival material in Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, Greek, Russian, French, and English. These sources will be processed through a quantitative and qualitative analysis for the construction of systematic data series, which are going to be fed into five relational databases, connecting data on events, institutions, individuals, and geographical information.

The project's dissemination activities include: The creation of an open access digital portal containing databases of sources, abstracts of deliverables, multimedia material, bibliography, and links to be used by the international academic community; the organization of four workshops (in Rethymno, Istanbul, Izmir, and Salonica) and one international conference (in Rethymno); the participation of its research team members in international conferences, seminars, workshops, popular lectures, and the production of a number of publications in open access (at least two books and ten articles) and two Ph.D. dissertations.

JANET aspires to create an innovative entanglement of military, social, political, and economic history which has the potential to change our current perception of the early modern Mediterranean and the role of Islam in it. One of its more important contributions will be that it will engage in the contemporary public discourse over the issue of religious co-existence in the Mediterranean region, by offering a topical, balanced, and unbiased historical approach to the Muslim presence in the area.