

## **Poster abstract - Geospatial analysis of the Association of European Historians**

The poster aims to illustrate the geospatial analysis of the Association of European Historians (AEH), a network of 632 scholars from 23 different countries operative from 1981 to 1994. The latter methodology is included in my P.h.D. research project, whose objectives are both to examine the AEH activity and to analyze its impact on the European integration process as well as on the historiographical debate of the period. The poster focuses specifically on the application of network and spatial analysis to demonstrate the connection between the spatial evolution of the AEH and the collaboration with the European Economic Community (EEC) institutions. The main output is a digital interactive map aimed at representing the correspondence between the spatial shift and the AEH detachment from the EEC sphere of influence.

According to a large part of the existing literature, the EEC in the 1980s supported the creation of what some called “Europeanness”. The Community bodies, notably the European Commission (EC), encouraged the meeting of researchers and historians to identify the common European origins and to promote the newborn history of European integration. The existing literature largely debates the EC attempts in this field, with particular reference to the “Liaison Committee of European historians” and the “European University Institute”. Conversely, one could note scarce attention to the European Parliament (EP) projects in the field and in particular the AEH framework. The few studies on the AEH focuses on president Armando Saitta and ostensibly concern the idea of Europe he supported or some congresses organized by the Association. Seemingly, the latter perspectives do not consider a broader significance of the AEH project. Indeed, in the first phase (1981-1985), it seemed closely linked to the EP and the member countries with the declared objective of producing an active contribution to the integration process. This collaboration was finalized to elaborate a common history of Europe that belonged to the Community institutions in a Euro-centric perspective, farther from the tendencies of historiographies in the 1980s towards the global turn and the criticism on modernity rhetorics. Conversely, in a second phase from 1985 onward, the AEH involved historians of the Soviet bloc to consider the history of Europe from a broader perspective. This East enlargement seems to correspond to a progressive detachment from the Community institutions. Hence, is there any connection between the spatial shift of the AEH and its collaboration with the EEC, notably the EP?

For a distant reading of the AEH I am combining network and spatial analysis. I am using Gephi to study the evolution of the network, especially referring to its evolution across time. To ensure the public display of the results and the publication of the data in Linked Open Data (LOD) format, I am using an experimental digital history tool developed by the [Digital Humanities Lab of Cagliari University \(DH.UNICA\)](#). The software plugin aims to connect Omeka-S’s cataloging resources with the

customization opportunities provided by Drupal in a full open-source digital environment. The project is developed in partnership with the Italian Institute for Modern and Contemporary Age (IIMCA), which is the owner of most of the primary sources employed. The digital interactive map will be disseminated on the web portal «[digitaliststor.it](http://digitaliststor.it)» with the purpose to implement a prototype of multilanguage and multi-layer interactive digital cultural heritage environment for DH projects, contents, and activities of the IIMCA.

I have presented the first results of the research at the II International conference International Lab for Innovative Social Research (ILIS) in 2020. I have published a paper within the conference proceedings "[Handbook of Research on Advanced Research Methodologies for a Digital Society](#)" (IGI Publishers, 2021).

## ESSENTIAL REFERENCES

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### **Bio:**

Alessandro Laruffa is a joint Ph.D. fellow in History of Europe and Digital History at Sapienza University of Rome and KU Leuven. He has a BA in International Relationships and a MA in Political Science (Sapienza University of Rome). He worked with the Vrije Universiteit Brussels and with the Institute of History of Mediterranean Europe – Italian Research Council. His research topics lie in the history of European historiography in the contemporary age, digital and public history, global history.