Proposal for the 3rd MMHN Conference

Salvatore Bottari (University of Messina)

The roots of the ‘Eastern Question’: the Russo-Turkish war of 1768-1774 in the diplomatic correspondence of the Italian states.

The Russo-Turkish war in 1768-1774 and the first partition of Poland (1772) indicated the gap between Western and Eastern Europe. France and England were projected to a colonial competition that, in the hierarchy of their geopolitical interests, marginalized - at least in the short term - the Central-Eastern part of the continent. At the same time the influence and prestige of France in the Eastern Mediterranean took a blow from the outcome of the war between the Russian and the Ottoman empires. Russia positioned itself as a protagonist in those areas of Europe - like the Mediterranean – from which it was formerly cut out. On the Black Sea the role of the ancient Muscovy was now dominant. Its influence in the Balkans increased too. The structural weakness of the Ottoman Empire became evident: hence rose the ‘Eastern Question’, as the European historiography - between the end of the Nineteenth century and the beginning of the Twentieth century - called the events that led to the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire and the formation of the Balkan states in Europe. Depending on their commercial and geopolitical interests and their international alliances, the Italian states implemented policies to support or not to cooperate with the Russian military fleet in the Mediterranean. Therefore diplomatic correspondence is a valuable source for the reconstruction of the impact that the events of the Russo-Turkish war in 1768-1774 had on the politics of the Italian states in the last decades of the Eighteenth century.
CV.
Salvatore Bottari is lecturer at the University of Messina, where he teaches Early Modern and Contemporary History and History of Modern Sicily at the Faculty of Political Sciences. He is fellow of a number of international historical associations and member of the International Advisory Board of Editors of “Journal of Maltese History”. Salvatore Bottari has published a number of papers in books and refereed academic journals. He is the author of three books on the history of the city of Messina, studied in the wider Mediterranean and European context: Post res perditas. Messina 1678-1713 (2005); Élites politiche, attività produttive e cultura a Messina tra Umanesimo e Rinascimento. Un dibattito storiografico (2007); Un difficile dopoguerra. La parabola dell’indipendentismo a Messina (1943-1947) (2007). He is the editor of various volumes including Rosario Romeo e «Il Risorgimento in Sicilia». Bilancio storiografico e prospettive di ricerca (2002).
E – MAIL: salvatore.bottari@unime.it