

**Marcel A. Farinelli**

**THE INVISIBLE MOTHERLAND?  
THE CATALAN-SPEAKING MINORITY IN SARDINIA  
AND CATALAN NATIONALISM**

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The town of Alghero, in north-western Sardinia, is today one of the most popular tourist sites of all the island, and it is one of the few coastal towns dating back to the Middle Ages. Sardinia has always had a troubled relationship with the sea, and most of its inhabitants traditionally preferred to live high up, in the mountains. The full reasons for this are still uncertain, but two factors can be pointed out: the dangers inherent in marshlands, notably malaria, and the threat of invasions.<sup>1</sup> Given this native choice only a small number of port cities have been founded, since approximately from 1000 BCE, though generally not by the islanders but by outsiders.

Alghero was one of these colonies, and today remains home to the only Catalan-speaking minority living in Italy. In terms of the overall Catalan language situation in Europe outside Spanish borders, the city represents its most peripheral part, separated by the Mediterranean, and much further away than Perpignan and French Catalonia, just across the Pyrenees. As an exclave, the Catalan-speaking community of Sardinia had a complex relationship with Catalan nationalists, but there are important differences with the context of south France. The geographical distance between Sardinia and Catalonia, the lack of familiar ties or any economic



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relationship during the last three centuries and, finally, the difference in number of inhabitants (Alghero: 43.534; French Catalonia: 457.238), created quite a unique situation.<sup>2</sup> As a result, its circumstances have not been well studied and scant attention has been granted to the writers, poets or activists from Alghero who, over the years, have identified themselves with Catalan nationalism, and to the role played by the small island city in this movement. This article tries to present this specific case and to raise some more general questions.<sup>3</sup>



*The town of Alghero* | SNIPVIEW.COM

## **Alghero: a Mediterranean coastal town**

The Gulf of Alghero is one of the few natural harbours of Sardinia, and one of the best in the western Mediterranean. But the role played by this site is related to the location of the entire island. Sardinia, along with Corsica,

occupies the centre of the western Mediterranean basin. This archipelago forms a platform between Africa and Europe. As British painter and traveller Thomas Forester indicated in the foreword to the second edition of his travel book about Sardinia and Corsica in 1861 (the same year when the Kingdom of Italy was established), these two islands – along with Sicily – are indispensable stepping stones on the route from Provence to Tunisia, but also from the Iberian to the Italian Peninsulas.<sup>4</sup> Given such a strategic location, Sardinia has been a much-disputed island. Maritime powers fighting for control of sea-lanes battled for access, not so much to control the entire territory but rather to establish suitable and well-protected ports along its coasts. Little is known about the most ancient inhabitants of Sardinia, or about the seven thousand stone towers (*Nuraghe*) that still exist on the island, since modern archaeologists have preferred to study, quite systematically, the coastal settlements of the Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians and Romans.<sup>5</sup>

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, in the fifth century, everything changed. The old, fortified port cities were sacked by Vandals and Muslims, and thereafter abandoned. Sardinia's upland inhabitants had poor maritime skills, so they were ineffective against Muslim raiders, who could establish transitory beachheads. Medieval Sardinia was governed by four 'kingdoms', called *Giugados* (from a Byzantine administrative term, literally 'judgeships'), a jurisdiction abandoned as Arab pressure increased.<sup>6</sup> For a time, Sardinia became a base from which Mediterranean pirates – notably from the coasts of Islamic Al-Andalus – could launch their attacks on Provence, Liguria, Tuscany and Latium. The rise of the Christian merchant republics in North Italy, such as Pisa and Genoa, increased trade across the Mediterranean after the tenth and eleventh centuries. The role of the Italian mercantile city-states renewed the geostrategic role played by Sardinia and Corsica: first as an indispensable barrier to Muslim raids, then as a platform from which to better control trade routes from Europe to Africa and the Levant. As could be expected, local Sardinian kings began to establish close links with powerful Genoese and Pisan families. These great houses or clans obtained lands and, more importantly, the right to build a few ports to handle their trade and to assure defence against piracy. Therefore during the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, mastery

of Sardinia was disputed between Pisa and Genoa. In this context, Alghero was probably founded in mid- to late-thirteenth century, as the personal dominion of one of the most powerful Genoese families: the Doria.<sup>7</sup> The settlement's first name was *La Lighera*, a Ligurian word used to indicate algae, or the place where such maritime vegetation, moved by the waves, washes the coastline.

Given their rivalry with both Pisa and Genoa, the Catalans and the Crown of Aragon also took part in this struggle. Nobles from Catalonia and the *Giuigado de Arborea* – the last of the Sardinian 'kingdoms' to resist Pisa and Genoa – had close matrimonial ties, and the Crown of Aragon was involved in Sardinian affairs from at least the mid-thirteenth century. The island, like Sicily and mainland Tuscany, was regarded as a papal fief, and for this reason it played a role in the dispute between the Pope and the Emperor and their respective partisans, the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, which divided the many republics, city-states and dynastic entities that crowded the Italian Peninsula.<sup>8</sup> At the end of the thirteenth century, the Crown of Aragon and the French House of Anjou, rulers of Sicily, were at war for the control of this island *and* Sardinia, so in 1297 pope Urban VIII, in an attempt to solve this conflict, invested James II of Aragon with the title of *Rex Sardiniae et Corsicae*. Such a grant was a typical feudal fiction: the two islands were still in the hands of Pisa and Genoa. So the Catalans entered in this competition ostensibly acting as 'liberators' of the native Sardinians, just as they had done in Sicily after the Sicilian Vespers and in the long war that followed (1282-1302).<sup>9</sup> The Catalans and the Aragonese arrived in Sardinia in 1323, but the conquest was expensive, difficult and required a century and a half to be 'solved'.<sup>10</sup>

In this new Sardinian war, Alghero played a central role. The town was conquered in 1353 for the House of the Counts of Barcelona, but just a few months later the inhabitants drove the Catalans out, an event that set off a revolt against the new masters throughout the whole island. So the Catalans organised another expedition in 1354 and, after a long siege, Peter III of Aragon finally entered the city and decided to expel all the inhabitants. During the following years, king Peter crafted a settlement programme for the city and its countryside to assure that this part of his island was populated strictly by faithful subjects of his Crown and the

original homelands. The decision to bring loyal colonisers was likewise followed in Cagliari, Sassari and Iglesias, where they were interspersed with the locals but, in the exceptional case of Alghero, the town was *completely* colonised with immigrants from Catalonia or Aragon, as well as from the quite recently acquired and resettled Valencia.<sup>11</sup> In this way, *l'Alguer* was born, now with a Catalan name and new townspeople.

The settlement was located on a hostile island populated by enemies. For many decades, until the early fifteenth century, the Kingdom of Sardinia existed only inside the walls of Cagliari and Iglesias in the south and those of Alghero in the north. The expression 'beyond the pale', normally applied to the Medieval Norman English kingdom of Ireland, works perfectly in the Sardinian instance. Catalan and Aragonese aristocratic families became the legal landlords of the whole island, but this control was ineffective. Just outside the walls of Alghero, all the villages and farms remained abandoned due to the constant state of war, and the colonisers of the town had serious problems in feeding themselves. Therefore during the first decades, the only means of survival for settlers was the sea. Accordingly, *l'Alguer* became a centre of piracy, trade and, above all, the only port in all western Sardinia where coral fishermen could legally operate. When the island was part of the Hispanic empire, from the fifteenth to the turn of the eighteenth centuries, the port city became the hub in northern Sardinia for all imports and exports, mostly grain, salt, cheese and leather. Those were indispensable commodities for maintaining the populace of Barcelona, or even supplying the royal armies.<sup>12</sup>

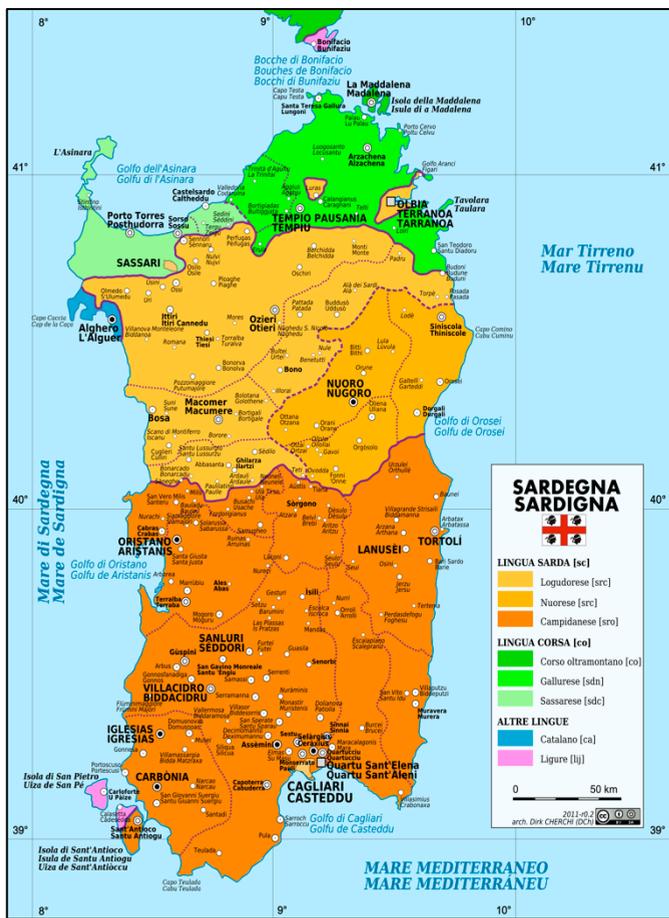
## **The linguistic minority**

All these relationships, mercantile or otherwise, changed with the War of Spanish Succession.<sup>13</sup> At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Mediterranean Spanish Empire came to an end and, after some adjustments with the Viennese Habsburgs, Sardinia became part of the dynastic dominions of the House of Savoy.

Although the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries were a time of decadence on the island, Sardinia and its aristocracy had strengthened ties with the Spanish Court and many Sardinian nobles played important roles in the extended administration of the Spanish Habsburgs. The more able leaders in Madrid tended to contrast and balance the Catalans, continuously asking for more self-government, against the Sardinian

aristocracy, which played a role in the repression of the Catalan revolt (1640-1652). Moreover, during the Thirty Years' War supplies from Sardinia were vital for sustaining Spanish military efforts. Throughout the seventeenth century the island was completely integrated in the Hispanic Monarchy, to the degree that finally noblemen from Sardinia were considered of the same status as those from the mainland.<sup>14</sup>

Without elaborating on the Spanish War of Succession here, it is important to remember how Sardinia, between



Linguistic map of Sardinia | WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

1708 and 1720, played a key role in the Mediterranean war. Sardinia passed from Bourbons to Habsburgs in 1708, then returned to Bourbons in 1717 and was finally put into the hands of the House of Savoy in 1720.<sup>15</sup> This transfer gave the Savoy the right to call themselves kings, but for the island the shift of dynasties did not entail any changes: for the next fifty years not much seemed to testify the presence of the new royal rulers from Turin. Not before 1760 was the Italian language (that is, literary Tuscan) made obligatory in administration and education, and only seven years later did the dynastic symbol of Aragon disappear from the coats of arms of cities and towns, to be replaced by the Savoyard cross.<sup>16</sup> From this point onwards, l'Alguer began to be *Alghero*. Such a slow and soft Italianisation, at a time when Italy did not exist as a single state, gradually altered the 'Iberian character' or style of Sardinian society, but it was ineffective in adapting all aspects of island life to 'continental' norms (islanders still today call people from the Italian Peninsula 'continentals'). It should be stressed how slowly the imagination of the islanders adapted, even after the unification of Italy between 1859 and 1870. An anecdote from the middle of the nineteenth century is very revealing. While quarrelling with a Piedmontese army officer, the mayor of a small village exploded with rage and said fiercely: 'I will send an official protest to the Capital, Madrid!'<sup>17</sup> But an unhurried rhythm of life in a backwater territory is not sufficient to explain why in Alghero people continued not only to speak Catalan, but, at the end of the nineteenth century, produced writers who tried to participate in the literary and nationalist movement of Catalonia.

The unification of Italy nevertheless created a completely new context in which to interpret the evolution of the Algherese community: that of the Italian nation-building process.<sup>18</sup> The construction of an Italian identification, and the consolidation of a new state, did not have great consequences for the former Catalan stronghold. The town had a very peripheral position: it was the first port where one arrived in Sardinia sailing from Barcelona, but, for a ship travelling from anywhere in Italy, this is a most unusual site at which to stop. Olbia, Cagliari or Porto Torres all are suitable ports for a link between Sardinia and Italy, not those on the west coast of the island. Furthermore, new techniques in navigation

undermined the economic usefulness of the harbour, until then a natural haven for smaller sailing ships. So Alghero lost its key role. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, when the rivalry between France and Italy for predominance in the Western Mediterranean burst into a bitter tariff war, the result was harsh, as it diminished even the export of local products such as olive oil or spiny lobster, traditionally aimed at the market in Marseille.<sup>19</sup>

After Italian unification, furthermore, the social composition of the town changed. A city like Alghero, in a monarchy that now included the entire Italian peninsula, along with densely populated Sicily, had only a secondary military relevance. After 1867 it was no longer considered a fortress city and urbanisation could grow beyond the medieval walls. The potential for urban growth brought many people from the villages around the city to relocate more comfortably there. But, perhaps surprisingly considering its depressed outlook, Alghero, was attractive to those yet poorer, notably many immigrants from the inland areas of Sardinia or even from southern Italy. The newcomers were drawn to the town by the opportunity to work as fishermen or seamen, to labour in some of the factories alongside the port, or even by jobs as rural hands in the agricultural holdings around the city. For them, Catalan was a means to integrate into town life and they tended to learn to speak in that language.<sup>20</sup> For instance, fishermen used it to clearly identify themselves as *algheresos* ('Algherese' in English) and so to detect strangers poaching in their fishing areas. Rivalry on the water could explain also help to why – and how – the language survived.

In this new context, also surprisingly, Catalans returned, as intellectuals fascinated by their former sway over Sardinia. During the second half of the nineteenth century, cultural life in Barcelona was dominated by the so-called *Renaixença*, largely a literary movement (and premise to nationalism) whose principal goal was the 'rebirth' of Catalan national culture – the very sense of the term.<sup>21</sup> Writers or travellers from Catalonia came to Alghero in search of documents, literature or other traces of an artistic and cultural heritage. They were convinced that Sardinia – and especially l'Alguer – could prove the golden age of the Catalan nation. These intellectuals saw Sardinia (and its Catalan-speaking corner) as a

magic casket in which elements of their national essence might have survived the effects of modernisation and nationalisation that had taken place in a quickly-growing metropolitan context such as that of Barcelona. Languages and traditions had resisted in a Mediterranean island that had been 'lost' almost two centuries before.

This sentimental nostalgia made a significant impact in the more cultivated sectors of Catalan society, far beyond its practical transcendence. The person most responsible was a Spanish vice-consul in Cagliari, Eduard Toda i Güell.<sup>22</sup> A good friend of such writers of the 'Catalan Rebirth' as Victor Balaguer, the well-to-do Toda visited Alghero often between 1887 and 1890, in search of medieval documents. He obtained some successes, including materials from the town archive he found and even stole or illegally bought. Today, some of those documents are still located in the Spanish archives.<sup>23</sup> Toda also published several works about this peculiar Catalan spot in Sardinia. His masterpiece was a monograph about Alghero, described of course as *l'Alguer*, an entire and quite 'uncorrupted' Catalan town.<sup>24</sup>

But there was also blowback. The presence of Toda in Alghero between 1887 and 1890 and the publicity he gave the city, had an important impact on local society. In addition, Toda lived to be 86 years old, until his death in 1941 forever the amateur antiquarian and a faithful correspondent. His campaign meant a dramatic upheaval of local customs: intellectuals from Alghero, since the end of the eighteenth century, used Italian, not Catalan. Such had been the case with the most important of them: historian Giuseppe Manno. He is considered the founder of the modern school of Sardinian history and in his masterpiece he outlined the history of a people resisting many invasions.<sup>25</sup> The last, and worst according to Manno, was the arrival of Catalans in the fourteenth century. Manno's work serves as a key element to better understand just how invisible the linguistic homeland had become to Alghero's inhabitants. Manno, it should be stressed, was a very successful Sardinian, who became not only president of the Senate of the Kingdom of Piedmont, but afterwards that of united Italy as well. So he reflected an official Savoy dynastic viewpoint and although born in Alghero, for Manno the local language was a 'foreign' dialect best forgotten. But by the end of the nineteenth century, after

Manno's death in 1868 and with Toda quite alive, some Algherese intellectuals began to use Catalan again.<sup>26</sup> They wrote mostly poems, but also some essays. These writings obtained an important audience in the Catalan-speaking community of Spain. The connection with Barcelona was no longer sustained by sea trade and economic links, but by cultural ties.



*The town council of Alghero* | [WWW.ALGUER.INFO](http://WWW.ALGUER.INFO)

Toda also tried to *politicise* the local intellectuals, quite unsuccessfully. He was not able to convince them to organise a Catalan nationalist movement as was rising in Catalonia. The situation of Alghero was that of a provincial town, where the elite had an important dependency on public administration. Almost all of the persons Toda dealt with were teachers, archivists or liberal professionals with a leading role in the municipal council. They had nothing to gain by taking part in a movement to reclaim

l'Alguer, the non-Italian identification of Alghero. Such was even more the case in a politically sensitive state as Italy that existed as a unified entity for twenty years only and that aspired to become a major power. For Italian nationalists the past was shameful, with the nation, since the fifteenth century, first subject to cruel Hispanic rule and then to tyrannical Austrian occupation. On Sardinia, where such foreign oppression had begun with the arrival of the Catalans, any connection was taboo, enough to classify any Catalan inheritance as more than politically incorrect. On the island, 'the Catalans' represented the main villain of what, in Spanish historiography, has been termed the *Black Legend*, the idea of unique Spanish evil; 'the Catalans' (coined 'the Aragonese' in mainland Italy) kept that reputation both for Italian nationalism and later for Sardinian nationalism as well.<sup>27</sup>

Even if they were a minority, between the end of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth a few intellectuals continued to use Catalan, maintaining links with literary figures in Catalonia. But only two among them expressed any sympathy with Catalan nationalism: Joan Pais and Antoni Ciuffo, the latter better known with his pseudonym of 'Ramon Clavellet'. Unlike most of their colleagues they were not of upper-class birth (which might show off Catalan or Spanish surnames) but came from middle strata, and their origins were far from Catalonia. The former, Joan Pais, had a surname that suggests he descended from a Sardinian family of rural origins, while the latter, Antoni Ciuffo, had Neapolitan ancestors and was born in Sassari, the capital of the north region of the island. Both were products of the immigration to Alghero that had followed the unification of Italy and as such they clearly embodied disillusionment with the results of Italian nation-building. Pais and Ciuffo were the only intellectuals from Alghero who visited Barcelona in turbulent 1902, witnessing abundant street demonstrations and strikes. Social protest led to the prohibition of the *Jocs Florals*, a Catalan literary competition to which both had been invited. During their trip they entered into close contact with Catalan nationalists and experienced the harshness of Spanish governmental repression against the labour movement, as well as against republicans and even bourgeois nationalists in Barcelona.

After this experience in the Catalan capital, the two had proven their solidarity with the nationalist movement in Catalonia and, from 1906 on, Ciuffo or 'Ramon Clavellet', even played an active role in it. Clavellet became well known for his patriotic poems, in which he referred to Catalonia as 'our mother' or 'motherland', especially after his starring participation in the First International Congress of the Catalan Language. He thereupon moved permanently to Catalonia.<sup>28</sup> In Barcelona, he collaborated with the Catalan press, for example in the journal *Catalonia*, where he was in charge of a section dedicated to Sardinia: *La Sardenya Catalana*. He also gave lectures about l'Alguer to highly-motivated audiences, under the auspices of Catalan nationalist organisations like the Lliga de Catalunya or the white-collar workers' centre (known by its acronym CADCI). In 1909, Clavellet moved to Reus, a middle-sized town near Tarragona, where he was active in local publications linked to the Nationalist Republican Federalists, an umbrella group for the left. Clavellet was even the director of several of the most important and politicised extreme nationalist periodicals: *La Kabila*, *Lo Campaneret* and *Foment*.<sup>29</sup> But his political activities were criticised or ignored in Alghero, where his colleagues did not want to make political declarations. For them the Catalan language was merely a cultural interest, a curiosity but not a political matter, and moreover they did not want problems with the Italian authorities. Yet the participation of Ciuffo with another militant *alguerès*, Joan Palomba (he too had Neapolitan ancestors) at the Language Congress of 1906 raised suspicions in Alghero, and even some criticism appeared in local newspapers.

Why was it so difficult, seen from Alghero, to understand the Catalan nationalist movement? The answer is simple: 'pan-catalanism', then being born as the ideal of uniting all the Catalan-speaking territories (what today would be termed the Catalan Countries), lacked all substance, beyond asserting the fact of linguistic kinship. Nobody in Alghero had any kind of substantial connection with Catalonia. In fact, the people from Alghero were cut off from the social, cultural and political life of the rest of the greater Catalan-speaking community and just a very small minority had a chance to read a few books or newspapers in Catalan in the local library. But these individuals, all part of the local elite, had no interest whatsoever

in following the path of the Catalan nationalists and preferred remaining faithful to the Italian state, which granted them their social status and employment. Common people, even if the majority spoke the local version of Catalan, were completely illiterate: they had no hopes of reading news from Catalonia and therefore could not ‘imagine’ a future outside Italy, except personally, as emigrants.<sup>30</sup>



## **The enclave between nationalisms: Italian and Sardinian, plus Catalan**

In sum, there was a structural misunderstanding between ‘our mother Catalonia’ – as Clavellet wrote – and the former colony. The inhabitants of Alghero were passive, while visitors from Barcelona spoke exaltingly of the Catalan roots of the Sardinian city. The former completely ignored the Catalan nationalist movement, so its implications, however remote, remained absolutely invisible. But from the moment when Catalan nationalists began to show an interest in the city, Alghero was transformed into a minority enclave, and its ancient name *l’Alguer* was once again used. All this happened at a time when, between the early years of the twentieth century and the First World War, another nationalist movement with markedly different claims was taking shape in Sardinia. This current – Sardinian nationalism, linked to the island and its own distinct language – would develop more fully in the postwar period.<sup>31</sup>

As happened with other islands of the Mediterranean with an Italian cultural link of some kind, like Corsica (a part of France) or Malta (a British colony), intellectuals and politicians in Sardinia were rethinking their connection with the mainland. After the end of the Great War in 1918, returning veterans started to organise a political movement that dealt with this issue of insular specificity. Quickly, they formed the first mass party in the history of the island, the Partito Sardo d’Azione (PSA, Sardinian Action Party).<sup>32</sup> Basically the PSA called for some degree of autonomy from Rome. The core ideas of the new party were republicanism (elimination of the monarchy), federalism (no more bureaucratic centralism from Rome) and some kind of peasant socialism (not Marxism), while only a minority wanted outright independence. The party won strongly in local and national elections in 1919 and 1921 and therefore offered a striking presence: it was the first autonomist party in all of Italy, the very first to publicly criticise the centripetal nature of the Italian state, even questioning the process of unification, the hitherto inviolable theme of the *Risorgimento*.

Catalans, as one of the many invaders of the island, had not been particularly welcomed during the *Risorgimento*, but now, as one of the many European peoples that were claiming more self-government, they began to be better regarded in the political imagination of Sardinian nationalists. Members of the PSA admitted the possibility of a Mediterranean federation between Sardinia, Corsica, Catalonia, the Balearic Islands and even Sicily.<sup>33</sup> But a fluid relationship between Sardinian and Catalan nationalists was still pending. The idea of the Catalan kings fighting treacherously against ‘the Sardinian Joan of Arc’, Queen Eleonora d’Arborea, remained somehow alive.

The PSA was the most powerful force on the island when Benito Mussolini began to build his dictatorship after the 1922 March on Rome. After a period of hostilities, Sardinian veterans and fascists reached an agreement: the local Fascist Party would be formed and controlled by the ex-members of the PSA. In this way Mussolini obtained control of the island’s society, while the autonomists could continue to improve their politics in culture and economy (on the condition of not criticising the process of consolidation of the fascist dictatorship). This alliance was called in Italian *Sardofascismo* (‘Sardinian fascism’) and immediately had its heyday.<sup>34</sup> But finally, even if some of the policies of the PSA were acted on during the first decade of the fascist regime, the strong Italian nationalism inherent to fascism brought this particular cohabitation with Sardinian nationalism to an end. In fact, one of the principal preoccupations of the Mussolini regime was to complete the nominal Italianisation of the entire country, a process initiated with the creation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861. For instance, during the 1930s numerous toponyms considered especially egregious were changed from Sardinian into Italian. This began to move into the terrain of literature and folklore: even some traditional poetry contests in Sardinian were forbidden.<sup>35</sup> And yet, up to the very last days of the dictatorship there was a sort of *modus vivendi* or understanding between Sardinian nationalism and Italian fascism, as long as the first was not overtly antifascist. But for the Catalans from Alghero this was not a very easy game to play: Catalans, unlike Sardinians or Sicilians, could not be considered ‘Italici’ (literally ‘Italics’), that is ethnically (or even racially) an ‘Italian people’. Fascism tried to

erase the Catalan past, through education and a programme of implicit population control, building a new town beside the old one, forbidden to Sardinians: Fertilia.<sup>36</sup> Though the initiative failed, it started a process that progressively reduced the use of Catalan, mostly after the end of the Second World War.

By 1946 Italy was transformed into a republic, with an advanced democratic constitution (approved in 1948) that granted the status of autonomy to certain regions, including Sardinia. This was a victory for the PSA, reborn as a democratic organisation, which now could work on improving the island's economy. After the devastation of World War II, all of Italy was so impoverished – being largely poor to start with – that language and culture were not considered as priorities. At that time the Italianisation of Sardinian society was so weak that it did not represent a threat to the traditional Sardinian way of life. During the late 1950s and through to the 1970s an ambitious economic plan for the island was first discussed and then put into practice, with agricultural reforms, public works and the creation of industrial plants, especially in the petrochemical industry. This 'Rebirth Plan' was meant to put an end to some of Sardinia's chronic problems: unemployment, crime and massive emigration.<sup>37</sup>

Meanwhile, in Catalonia, the Franco dictatorship interpreted the public use of Catalan as a menace or a declaration of hostility to the regime. Again, as in the late nineteenth century, some intellectuals – and even some elderly radical nationalists – from Catalonia published books about l'Alguer.<sup>38</sup> Poets and intellectuals from Catalonia, Valencia and Majorca visited Alghero, participating in public lectures, conferences and poetry contests. The most important of such activities was the so-called 'Rediscovery Cruise' of 1960, when about 150 'tourists' more or less occupied the city for some days.<sup>39</sup> Here they could freely speak in Catalan, rather difficult to do in urban Catalonia, and sing their nationalist songs, in doing so protesting against Franco. These activities were supported in Alghero by a group of citizens devoted to the local version of Catalan, organised in various cultural associations. But these *algueresos* had no desire to enter politics, to the degree that there was coordination of these activities with the Spanish embassy in Italy, in order to avoid any possible problems.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, the most prominent figures in Alghero who kept in

touch with the other Catalan-speaking areas in the fifties and sixties were involved in fascism during Mussolini's regime (but they were not 'Sardofascisti'). This fact indicates just how distant the cultural activists in Alghero were from the mainstream of Catalan nationalism. The town could not be a genuine paradise for Catalan nationalist opponents to Franco, because there was no political solidarity for the Catalan nationalist struggle. From Alghero, it was impossible to see or to feel real empathy for the protests against Franco in Spain. Simply put, why should they be in favour of a Catalan state?

While Alghero served to demonstrate the vitality of a persecuted language and to offer international visibility to Catalan nationalists, little of this really mattered to the inhabitants of the city. They did not read any newspaper, nor watch television, nor hear radio from Barcelona, so no information arrived. What could arrive was subject to the Franco regime's censorship. This complete ignorance was an insurmountable barrier. Therefore the mix of Catalan, Sardinian and Italian spoken in Alghero was about to disappear, due to the immigration, the lack of legal protection for the minority language and the weight of the powerful Italian-speaking media. In the 1970s this regression was so evident that for the first time a civic movement (called 'Alguer 80') was organised to demand the use of Catalan in municipal administration and at school. Catalan speakers in Alghero, as well as Sardinians and others elsewhere in Italy, were not considered linguistic minorities. When the process of Italianisation was finally about to convert Italy into an effectively united country in linguistic terms, worries arose about the loss of cultural peculiarity and diversity. This matter was not considered important during earlier decades, when Sardinian and Catalan (at least in Alghero) were the most popular languages on the island, Italian only being spoken by the middle and high classes in urban areas. In order to avoid the cultural changes, in the 1970s Sardinian nationalists adopted a more radical view of the relationship with Italy, openly talking about independence, while a radical left-wing separatist movement arose.<sup>41</sup> In line with then fashionable Third World rhetoric elsewhere, the latter group began to identify Sardinia as a 'colony' of Italy. From this experience the first independentist party was born.

Some residents of Alghero were involved in these activities. The outstanding figure was Rafael Caria, a lawyer who had studied in Catalonia just at the end of the sixties and who started defending the Catalan identification of Alghero from a political point of view. He was the first to set up a civic and political movement about this question and to use Catalan at assemblies of the town council, provoking fierce reactions from the Communist Party (of which he was officially a representative) and from the neo-fascists. For some years, the group led by Caria talked of Sardinia as an 'Italian colony', presenting the improvement of the Catalan language spoken in Alghero as an initial stepping stone to future liberation. Finally, in 1980 Caria organised a radical left-wing independentist party, a first in Sardinian politics, which in name seemed to draw inspiration from Basque ETA (acronym for Euskadi ta Askatasuna, or 'Basque Country and Freedom'): the new organisation was Sardenya i Llibertat, or 'Sardinia and Freedom'.

The subliminal message was strictly related to the Sardinian left, but also to radical left-wing Catalan nationalism. This meant that, between the end of the seventies and the beginning of the eighties, Catalan nationalism was actually visible for the first time from l'Alguer, even if it was just for few devoted persons. Many factors assured this visibility: first of all the evolution in communications technology, and the presence, both in Sardinia and Catalonia, of separatist and nationalist movements. Moreover, during the seventies Italian left-wing student movements, to which Caria and others Sardinian nationalists were linked, demonstrated public sympathy with anti-Franco protesters of different ideologies, from anarchists to nationalists. In this new context, the town council of Alghero, following a proposal of the group led by Caria, showed solidarity with the struggle in Spain against Franco, and that in Northern Ireland for secession from the United Kingdom and integration in the Republic of Ireland. First in 1975, when two members of ETA and three of the FRAP (a Spanish armed left-wing organisation) were executed, and then in 1981, after Bobby Sands died as a consequence of a long hunger strike, civic authorities of Alghero sent formal protests to the Spanish and British embassies in Rome.

## **Final considerations**

The context of l'Alguer/Alghero can be compared to that of French Catalonia. Here Catalan nationalists tried to establish permanent links with Catalan-speaking intellectuals, and this since the late eighteenth century. These intents were not as unsuccessful as those in Alghero. Northern Catalonia, as the nationalists called it, had not played a secondary role in the development of Catalan culture, with important figures as Joan Amade or Charles Bauby. But, in spite of the existence of a minor regionalist political movement based on Catalan language, Catalan nationalism failed to establish itself as a major political force. Catalan activists, in general, avoided the political arena, remaining on a cultural terrain. Pan-catalanism, or irredentism, was embraced by some intellectuals or some politicians, but it was, since our days, a minor option. Scholars attribute this situation to the double patriotism of the northern Catalans: proud of their Catalan heritage, but at the same time faithful to France.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, Catalans living in Spain, mostly during the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship, had a bad reputation among French Catalans, a factor that could explain a certain rejection of an imagined common nation. In many aspects, the context of the Catalan speakers in Sardinia is similar to that in France, the main differences related to the physical distance, the number of inhabitants and the existence on the island of a Sardinian nationalism. And, moreover, French Catalonia differs from Alghero for the presence of political parties directly linked to Catalan nationalist parties: forces as Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (leftist and republican nationalists) or Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya (centre-right nationalists) have a delegation in French Catalonia or a direct link with a local party. The two exclaves, in conclusion, had both tried to maintain a link with the 'motherland', but there was a misunderstanding between the pan-catalanist position of many nationalists in Catalonia and the more cultural approach of the Sardinian and the French Catalan communities. This lack of a common political position, in the two cases, was almost overcome in the mid-seventies, after the fall of the Franco regime. But many misunderstandings or unsolved problems remained and, in Sardinia as in French Catalonia, the use of Catalan language

diminished, Catalan nationalist parties remained irrelevant, while Catalan identity was in part folklorised and presented as one of the main attraction for tourists.

With the democratisation of the Spanish society, Catalonia regained an autonomous government in 1977, as Sardinia had after the end of World War II. But, in spite of this autonomy, Sardinian was not regarded as a minority language by the Italian state. Only in 1997 did the Regional Assembly pass a law granting legal protection to this language on the island. Two years later Italy finally recognised most of the linguistic minorities within its borders, including Catalans and Sardinians. All these factors created a framework through which institutions of different kinds were able to operate to avoid the disappearance of the Catalan language in Alghero. But this was not easy, and even close collaboration between the Catalan government (called *Generalitat*) and the municipal authorities of Alghero has not solved the problem. Catalan, certainly by the seventies, had lost its predominance to Italian: it was not taught in school, except for some hours, and only one private school used it as its vehicular idiom, and even there only as part of its kindergarten service. The successes of the group led by Caria were temporary and during the eighties these activists were so divided that a shared cultural and linguistic policy was impossible to plan. Personal affairs aside, the main problem were the relationships with associations and political parties based in Catalonia and moreover with the *Generalitat*. Roughly speaking, while some activists from Alghero saw these links positively, others preferred to maintain a more distant position. Such a disagreement helped to make Catalan nationalism even more irrelevant, and therefore heightened perceptions that questioned the real utility of maintaining the Catalan language in Alghero. The fact is clear: there is no way to sustain the cultural vitality of the spoken Catalan without a strong relationship with Catalonia.

Without an institutional connection or a trade link Catalan in Alghero seemed useless. And in a society that increasingly uses a common and standardised language – here I mean Italian – speaking in ‘dialect’ has no practical purpose. Inhabitants born at the end of the seventies, like myself, have for the most part not learned Catalan from their parents, nor at school. There was a time, mostly during the nineties, when Catalan

speakers in Alghero were convinced that the language would be lost after their lifetimes. Nevertheless, there was an unexpected surprise. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, some people, again like myself, began to study Catalan, and to use it. Why? It may sound a bit banal, but the former settlement and its distant capital are now no longer united by sea-lanes; instead they are connected by a Ryanair Boeing 737. A cheap airplane connection attracts tourists, especially from Barcelona, searching for sea and sun, but also for a taste of the particular mix of Catalan, Sardinian and Italian culture. In Alghero they can spend a good holiday in a lost part of the disappeared Crown of Aragon, hearing an odd version of their national language. Thanks to this situation and to the many occasions of contact between Catalonia and Alghero that current technology offers, it is now easy to follow events in Barcelona, as well as the advent of a new style of Catalan nationalism – all in real time, online.

The 11th of September of 2013, the emblematic Catalan national holiday, a peculiar event took place, the so-called *Via Catalana*. In Alghero a delegation of the local associations of Catalan-speakers, with those of all Sardinian nationalist parties, linked themselves in a symbolic human chain in solidarity with the one made by Catalan nationalists in Catalonia. Does this mean that Catalonia is now conceived as a motherland, and that some ‘patriots’ are actually pan-catalanists? It is not likely. The nebulous question whether the linguistic minority should form part of an eventual Catalan nation-state has never been seriously tackled. All writers, poets or activists from Alghero cited in this paper have glossed over the question. Only Joan Pais and Ramon Clavellet talked of Catalonia as their *patria*, but did so in a naive way, without any serious reflection. While Rafael Caria used to say that Barcelona was *the* capital, he did not specify whether he saw this in a cultural or a political sense. Sometimes the answer to this question was cryptic. One can cite Antoni Simon Mossa, an outstanding figure both for Sardinian nationalism and pro-Catalan activism in Alghero (he was leader of both in the late sixties). Mossa asserted that ‘Sardinians and people from Alghero are the same’, a sentence open to various interpretations.<sup>43</sup> This is a key point, still unresolved, and probably the contradiction that could explain the divisions inside activism in Alghero. It is also the sign of a certain misunderstanding with mainland Catalan

nationalists. For instance, when Algerese show support for whatever might seem pertinent in Barcelona, Catalan nationalists perceive a full-scale participation, trying to involve the activists in some campaigns that, seen from a Sardinian perspective, are hard to understand.



*Via Catalana in Alghero, 11 September 2013 | FINESTRO.WORDPRESS.COM*

In other words, it is the very complexity of the context that creates this difficulty. The presence in Alghero of three different and opposed national options – Sardinian, Catalan and Italian – makes the full identification of pro-Catalan activists from Alghero with their Catalan ‘motherland’ and the acceptance of a pan-catalanist perspective problematic. In contrast, many Catalan nationalists assert that this Sardinian city should be part of a hypothetical common nation-state for all the Catalan speakers. In certain cases they even consider that the simple fact of speaking Catalan in

Alghero means accepting such a political posture. But the recently increased number of persons interested in learning Catalan in the Sardinian town is not a consequence of a complete identification with the struggle of Catalan nationalists; perhaps it depends more on job or study opportunities that the knowledge of this language offered in the years before the 2007 crisis. The confusion between professional profiling and ideological adherence is an indication of how difficult it is to see Catalan nationalism clearly and in all its aspects and implications in a context as complex as that of Alghero. At the same time, it also proves how difficult it is for Catalans to perceive Sardinian nationalism, and its implications for the development of the only Catalan minority inside Italy.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> For the geography of the island, see M. Le Lannou, *Pâtres et paysans de la Sardaigne* (Tours, 1941). For malaria and its impact in the development of Sardinian history, see E. Tognotti, *Per una storia della malaria in Italia. Il caso della Sardegna* (Milan, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> For the case of the Catalan-speaking community in South France, also called Northern Catalonia or Rosselló (in French: Pyrénées-Orientales), see N. Berjoan, *L'identité du Roussillon: penser un pays catalane à l'âge des nations, 1780-2000* (Perpignan, 2011); F. Zantedeschi, *Il malinteso rousillonese-catalano. Un approccio comparativo allo studio del catalanismo in Roussillon (1880-1920)* (BA thesis, Università Cà Foscari, Venice 2002/2003).

<sup>3</sup> The contents of this article are the result of my research; unless otherwise specified in endnotes, I refer to my PhD dissertation: M.A. Farinelli, *Un arxipèlag invisible. La relació impossible de Sardenya i Còrsega sota nacionalismes: segles XVIII-XX* (PhD diss., Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 2013) 492-669. As a brief résumé, see M.A. Farinelli, *Història de l'Alguer* (Barcelona, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> T. Forester, *Rambles in the islands of Corsica and Sardinia* (London, 1861) V-VII.

<sup>5</sup> About Sardinian ancient history, see G. Lilliu, *La civiltà dei Sardi. Dal Paleolitico all'età dei nuraghi* (Turin, 1988); A. Mastino, *Storia della Sardegna antica* (Cagliari, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> See A. Boscolo, *La Sardegna dei Giudicati* (Cagliari, 1979); Idem, *La Sardegna bizantina e alto-giudicale* (Sassari, 1978); G. Milia, 'La civiltà giudicale', in: M. Guidetti (ed.), *Storia dei Sardi e della Sardegna* (Milan, 1988) vol. 2, 193-229; S. Petrucci, 'Storia politica e istituzionale della Sardegna medioevale', in: Guidetti (ed.), *Storia dei Sardi*, 97-156.

<sup>7</sup> About the involvement of those maritime powers in Sardinia, see F. Aritzu, *La Sardegna pisana e genovese* (Sassari, 1985); G. Meloni, 'La Sardegna nel quadro della politica mediterranea di Pisa, Genova, Aragona', in: Guidetti (ed.), *Storia dei Sardi*, 49-96; J. Heers, 'Pisani e genovesi nella Sardegna medioevale: vita politica e sociale (X-XV secolo)', in: Guidetti (ed.), *Storia dei Sardi*, 231-250. For Corsica, see P. Antonetti, *Histoire de la Corse* (Paris, 1990) 121-144; S.P.P. Scalfati (ed.), *La Corse médiévale* (Ajaccio, 1994).

<sup>8</sup> As an introduction to that question, see J.C. Moore, 'Pope Innocent III, Sardinia and the Papal State', in: *Speculum*, 62/1 (1987), 81-101.

<sup>9</sup> For the rivalry between the Crown of Aragon and Genoa: F. Giunta, *Aragoneses y catalanes en el Mediterráneo* (Barcelona, 1989; first Italian edition: Palermo, 1953); G. Meloni, *Genova e Aragona al tempo di Pietro il Cerimonioso*, 3 vol. (Padova, 1971-1982). For the history of the Ligurian city: S. Epstein, *Genoa & the Genoese 958-1528* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1996). For the Sicilian Vespers: S. Runciman, *The Sicilian Vespers. A history of the Mediterranean world in the later thirteenth century* (Cambridge, 1992).

<sup>10</sup> For the Catalan expansion in the Mediterranean and the establishment of the Kingdom of Sardinia, see A. Arribas Palau, *La Conquista de Cerdeña por Jaime II de Aragón* (Barcelona, 1952); Idem, *La Conquista de Sardenya* (Barcelona, 1961); B. Anatra, 'Dall'unificazione aragonese ai Savoia', in: G. Galasso (ed.), *Storia d'Italia* (Turin, 1984) vol. 10, 191-663 (191-364); T. Bisson, *The medieval Crown of Aragon. A short history* (Oxford, 1986) 86-103; R. Conde y Delgado de Molina, 'La Sardegna Aragonese', in: Guidetti (ed.), *Storia dei Sardi*, 251-278; M. Del Treppo, 'The Crown of Aragon and the Mediterranean', in: *Journal of European Economic History*, 2/1 (1973) 161-185.

<sup>11</sup> Bisson, *The medieval Crown*, 109-111; R. Conde y Delgado de Molina, 'Il ripopolamento catalano di Alghero', in: A. Mattone & P. Sanna (eds.), *Alghero, la Catalogna, il Mediterraneo* (Sassari, 1995) 75-103.

<sup>12</sup> On the role played by Sardinia and Alghero: VV.AA., *XIV Congresso di storia della Corona d'Aragona. La Corona d'Aragona in Italia: Il regnum Sardiniae et Corsicae nell'espansione mediterranea della Corona d'Aragona* (Sassari, 1995) vol. 2; M. Tangheroni, 'la Sardegna e Alghero nel sistema dell'economia catalana', in: Mattone & Sanna (eds.), *Alghero*, 179-189.

<sup>13</sup> VV.AA., *L'aposta catalana a la Guerra de Successió. 1705-1707* (Barcelona, 2007); J. Albareda, *La Guerra de Successión de España. 1700-1714* (Barcelona, 2010); Idem, *Catalunya en un conflicte europeu. Felip V i la pèrdua de les llibertats catalanes* (Barcelona, 2001); A.D. Francis, *The First Peninsular War. 1702-1713* (London, 1975); L. Frey, *A question of Empire. Leopold I and the War of Spanish Succession 1701-1705* (New York, 1983); H. Kamen, *The War of Succession in Spain. 1700-1715* (London, 1969).

<sup>14</sup> These issues are widely discussed in A. Mattone, *Cerdeña, un reino de la Corona de Aragón bajo los Austrias* (Valencia, 2010) 303-427.

<sup>15</sup> G. Symcox, *Victor Amadeus II. Absolutism in the Savoyard State, 1675-1730* (Berkeley - Los Angeles, 1983) 171-189. On the terms of this transfer between Bourbons and Savoy, see A. Mattone, 'La cessione de Regno di Sardegna dal trattato di Utrecht alla presa di possesso sabauda', in: *Rivista storica italiana*, CIV (1992) 5-89.

<sup>16</sup> For the policy of the House of Savoy in Sardinia during the 17th century, see M. Lepori, *Dalla Spagna ai Savoia. Ceti e corona della Sardegna del Settecento* (Rome, 2003).

<sup>17</sup> A. Ferrero della Marmora, *Itinéraire de l'Ile de Sardaigne* (Turin, 1860) vol. 2, 147.

<sup>18</sup> On this point the bibliography is wide; for an indication in English, see A.M. Banti, *Il Risorgimento italiano* (Rome, 2011); D. Beales, *The Risorgimento and the unification of Italy* (London, 1971); C.M. Lovett, *The democratic movement in Italy, 1830-1876* (Cambridge, 1982); D. Mack Smith, *Victor Emanuel, Cavour and the Risorgimento* (London, 1971); G. Sabbatucci, V. Vidotto (eds.), *L'unificazione italiana* (Roma, 2011); L. Riall, *The Italian Risorgimento. State, society and national*

*unification* (London, 1994); S.J. Woolf, *The Italian Risorgimento* (London, 1969). For the Sardinian context, see F. Atzeni, A. Mattone (eds.), *La Sardegna nel Risorgimento* (Rome, 2014).

<sup>19</sup> On the so called ‘Trade War’ between France and Italy, see A. Billot, *La France et l’Italie. Histoire des années troubles, 1881-1899* (Paris, 1905); C. Duggan, *Francesco Crispi. From nation to nationalism* (New York, 2002) 518-523. For its consequences in Sardinia: M.L. Coda, *La Sardegna nella crisi di fine secolo. Aspetti dell’economia e della società sarda nell’ultimo ventennio dell’Ottocento* (Sassari, 1977).

<sup>20</sup> F. Ballone, *An acoustic study of Sardinian and Algerese Catalan vowels* (PhD diss., Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2013) 33-42; E. Chessa, *Another case of language death? The intergenerational transmission of Catalan in Alghero* (PhD diss., Queen Mary-University of London, 2011) 51-52. I suggest these dissertations for further bibliographical information, due to the lack of English language works about the Catalan minority of Alghero. Of course, Catalan publications about this argument abound.

<sup>21</sup> Few works on Catalan nationalism are written in English, so consult the following books for further bibliographical sources on the *Reinaxença*: A. Balcells, *Catalan nationalism. Past and present* (London, 1996) 25-27; D. Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain* (London, 1997) 11-17; K. McRoberts, *Catalonia. Nation-building without a state* (Toronto, 2001) 16-20.

<sup>22</sup> There is no complete biography on Toda i Güell; for some information, see M. Ginés Blasi, ‘Eduard Toda i Güell: from vice-consul of Spain in China to the *Reinaxença* in Barcelona (1871-1884)’, in: *Entremons. UPF Journal of World History*, 5 (2013); E. Fort i Cogull, *Eduard Toda tal i com l’he conegut* (Barcelona, 1975); J. Massó Carballido, *Eduard Toda i Güell: de Reus a Sardenya* (Cagliari, 2010).

<sup>23</sup> Part of the Toda's working papers about his researches have been recently published: E. Toda i Güell, *Cortes españolas de Cerdeña* (Cagliari, 2009); Idem, *Memoria de los archivos de Cerdeña* (Cagliari, 2009).

<sup>24</sup> E. Toda i Güell, *L’Alguer, un poble català d’Itàlia* (Barcelona, 1888). The same author published others works about Sardinia and Alghero, such as *Bibliografía española de Cerdeña* (Madrid, 1890); *La poesia catalana a Sardenya* (Barcelona, 1888); *Recorts catalans de Sardenya* (Barcelona, 1903).

<sup>25</sup> VV.AA., *Giornata di studi su Giuseppe Manno. Politico, storico e letterato* (Quartu Sant'Elena, 1989); A. Mattone, *Giuseppe Manno magistrato, storico, letterato tra Piemonte della Restaurazione e Italia liberale* (Naples - Rome, 2009).

<sup>26</sup> R. Caria, 'Els retrobaments a l'Alguer els segles XIX i XX', in: J. Carbonell & F. Manconi, *I Catalani in Sardegna* (Cagliari, 1984) 183-186 (183-185); A. Mattone & P. Sanna 'Per una storia economica e civile della città di Alghero', in: Mattone & Sanna (eds.), *Alghero, 737-836* (816-819).

<sup>27</sup> See how the history of Sardinia between 1297 and 1720 is judged in G. Manno, *Storia di Sardegna* (Milan, 1835; original edition: Turin, 1825-1827) 2 vol., 3-350. On the interpretation of the Hispanic past in the Italian and Sardinian historiography, see A. Musi (ed.), *Alle origini di una nazione. Antispagnolismo e identità italiana* (Milan, 2003).

<sup>28</sup> For a short biography, see A. Nughes, *Ramon Clavellet. Pàgines de literatura algueresa* (Alghero, 1991).

<sup>29</sup> On Catalan Republican nationalism, see A. Duarte, *Història del republicanisme a Catalunya* (Lleida - Vic, 2004); S. Izquierdo Ballester, *El republicanisme nacional a Catalunya. La gestació de la Unió Federal Nacionalista Republicana* (Barcelona, 2010).

<sup>30</sup> On the relationship between a common printed literature and nationalism, see B. Anderson, *Imagined communities. Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London - New York, 1991) 67-82.

<sup>31</sup> M. Clark, 'Sardinia: cheese and modernization', in: C. Levy, *Italian regionalism. History, identity and politics* (Oxford - Washington, 1996) 81-106 (85-87); C. Roux, 'The Partito Sardo d'Azione: regionalist mobilization in Southern Italy', in: L. De Winter, M. Gómez-Reino et al., *Autonomist parties in Europe: identity politics and the revival of the territorial cleavage* (Barcelona, 2006) 189-218 (191-194).

<sup>32</sup> On this party and for further bibliographical sources, see M. Brigalia, 'La Sardegna dall'età giolittiana al fascismo', in: L. Berlinguer & A. Mattone (eds.), *Storia d'Italia. Le regioni dall'unità ad oggi: la Sardegna* (Turin, 1998) 575-629; Clark, 'Sardinia', 87-89; C. Roux, 'From Great War to democracy. Former combatants and Sardinian autonomy movement', in: N. Duclos, *War veterans in post-war situations. Chechnya, Serbia, Turkey, Peru and Cote d'Ivoire* (London, 2012) 201-218. For the recent history of PSA, and a more political analysis: E.

Hepburn, 'Explaining failure: the high and low of Sardinian nationalism', in: *Regional & Federal Studies*, 19/4-5 (2009) 595-618; Idem, 'The polarisation and de-polarisation of Sardinian nationalism' (paper presented in Edinburgh, 2007); Roux, 'The Partito Sardo d'Azione', 194-215. For a comparative perspective that includes Corsica and the Balearic Islands, see A. Fazi, 'The Western Mediterranean islands and the many faces of independentism', in: *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 50/4 (2012) 474-493.

<sup>33</sup> G. Contu, *Il federalismo nella storia del sardismo* (Cagliari, 1994) 15; Idem, *L'idea federalista nell'evoluzione storica del sardismo*, in: A. Contu (ed.), *Il pensiero federalista in Sardegna* (Cagliari, 1996) vol. 2, 91-109 (97-99).

<sup>34</sup> Bibliography about this issue is scarce: S. Cubeddu, *Il sardo-fascismo tra politica, cultura ed economia* (Cagliari, 1993); F. Manconi & G. Melis, 'Sardofascismo e cooperazione. Il caso della FEDLAC', in: *Archivio Sardo del movimento operaio, contadino e autonomistico*, 8-10 (1977) 204-234; L. Marroccu, 'Il ventennio fascista (1923-1943)', in: Berlinguer & Mattone (eds.), *Storia d'Italia*, 633-713 (633-652); L. Ortu, 'Il Sardofascismo nelle carte di Paolo Pili. Contributo per una storia della questione sarda', in: *Archivio Storico Sardo*, 24 (1990) 294-337.

<sup>35</sup> For any further bibliographical indication about this period, see Marroccu, 'Il ventennio fascista'.

<sup>36</sup> M.A. Farinelli, *El feixisme a l'Alguer* (Barcelona, 2010) 73-114. On the new town Fertilia: Idem, 'Città nuove, colonizzazione e impero. Il caso di Fertilia', in: *Passato & Presente*, 88 (2013) 57-82.

<sup>37</sup> A. Accardo, 'Politica, economia e cultura nella Sardegna autonomistica (1948-1998)', in: A. Accardo (ed.), *L'isola della rinascita. Cinquant'anni di autonomia della Regione Sardegna* (Rome - Bari, 1998) 5-135 (35-121); F. Soddu, 'Il Piano di rinascita della Sardegna: gli strumenti istituzionali e il dibattito politico', in: Berlinguer & Mattone (eds.), *La Sardegna*, 995-1034.

<sup>38</sup> The most important were P. Català i Roca, *Invitació a l'Alguer actual* (Palma, 1957); M. Pagès i Mercader, *Crònica descriptiva de l'Alguer* (Girona, 1957).

<sup>39</sup> The cruise and the days the passengers spent in Alghero were described in a special issue of a Catalan review published in Perpignan (France): *Tramontane* (1961).

<sup>40</sup> M.A. Farinelli, 'Benvinguts amics catalans. Catalunya i l'Alguer entre el "Viatge del Retrobament" i els Jocs Florals de 1961', in: *Recerques*, 69 (2014) 217-244.

<sup>41</sup> Clark, 'Sardinia', 97-99; Hepburn, 'Explaining failure', 570-571.

<sup>42</sup> Berjoan, *L'identité du Roussillon*.

<sup>43</sup> A. Simon Mossa, 'L'ensenyança del passat', in: *Renaixença Nova*, 25/1/1961.