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## How European Countries Bordering the Mediterranean Have Affected Bioethics, with Special Emphasis on Croatia, Greece, Italy, and Spain<sup>1</sup>

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## SUMMARY

One of the promising ways of constructing bioethics outside the global mainstream – characterized by a perspective narrowed down to issues related to medical ethics and research – is undoubtedly the Mediterranean bioethics, based on the rich intellectual heritage of the basin between European, Asian, and African continents. This bioethics, addressing the entire bios and thus far closer to the original ideas of Fritz Jahr and Van Rensselaer Potter, has particularly been nourished in Spain, Italy, Croatia, and Greece, producing an extensive corpus of publications.

Following an international project devoted to investigating those cultural traditions and their bioethical roots, the present paper offers a tentative overview of the most influential individuals and their ideas and the most active institutions in the area.

**Keywords:** Mediterranean Bioethics, European Bioethics, History of Bioethics, Fritz Jahr, Van Rensselaer Potter, Culture, Tradition.

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The Mediterranean is a world in itself; it combines the influences of three ancient and huge religions, at least twenty countries with some fifteen nations, and an even greater number of cultures. Such a variety also has to be reflected in its bioethics. Indeed, the way bioethics has been imported and/or developed in various Mediterranean countries has been quite different. Judging from the vividness of the publishing activities, some of those countries are more proactive than others. Following an international project, we decided to review four of them – Spain, Italy, Croatia, and Greece.

A lot has been written about the Mediterranean, whether we are discussing its historical, cultural, political, or geographical heritage. Many studies have shown similarities between the populations surrounding the Mediterranean Sea rather than between those with whom they share a geo-political area. The Mediterranean connects three different continents: Africa, Asia, and Europe, and therefore, also different religions and cultures. Among these diversities, there are numerous moral differences, which can cause difficulties in behavior and action (Caenazzo & Borovečki, 2022; Mallia, 2012). Ethical dilemmas and questions about life and death, or health and disease, as well as some ecological questions, seek answers in a discipline that will create concrete answers in the theoretical, practical, and behavioral sense of a compact space with broad worldviews such as the Mediterranean area (Matulić, 2007). We can consider that region the birthplace of some of the most significant civilizations and doctrines in history. Virtue Ethics, as developed by Aristotle, and Medical Ethics, as established by Hippocrates, both originated in the tradition of the Mediterranean, particularly in Greece.

On the other hand, in Spain, at the intersection of the medico-philosophical dilemmas, Diego Gracia Guillén came up with the concept of Mediterranean bioethics, creating a bridge between classical and modern ethical traditions: extracting virtue ethics from history and oblivion (Southern European) and rescuing the ethics of principles and duties (Anglo-American) from mere formalism and proceduralism. Actually, he was one of the first to criticize the Anglo-American approach to bioethics, narrowed down to medical practice and biomedical issues (Gracia, 2001). Today, with the discovery of Fritz Jahr's work, we know for sure that bioethics is much wider (Rinčić et al., 2021).

Mediterranean bioethics found its way in Italy as well. Namely, Salvatore Privitera accepted Gracia's basic ideas with the need to sensitize individual cultures in an intercultural and interreligious dialogue that will find a common language in solving (bio)ethical dilemmas in the Mediterranean (Privitera, 1994). This specific approach should respect the ethical and legal aspects in the diversity of historical, philosophical, social, cultural, and medical traditions and all moral dilemmas in the field of life sciences and health care, fostering a dialogue of valuable aspects of life, health, and nature at a level that defines the Mediterranean area (Matulić, 2007).

Mediterranean bioethics encompasses many life factors that can create unique bioethical challenges in this region. This contextual approach enables a deeper understanding of global bioethical issues, which take different forms and solutions within the Mediterranean context. It emphasizes the importance of respecting cultural differences while simultaneously recognizing and supporting shared moral values (Mallia, 2012).

## **SPAIN**

According to the proposal of F. Abel and N. Terribas (2010), the development of bioethics in Spain can be divided into three periods.

The first period (1976–1985) is dominated by Abel's Borja Institute of Bioethics activity in Barcelona. Francesc Abel i Fabre (1933–2011), Jesuit by education, gynecologist-obstetrician, and philosopher-sociologist (demographer), was a doctoral student at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics in the early 1970s. Returning to Catalonia in 1976, he founded the first bioethical institute in Europe, which was taken over by the lawyer Núrriji Terribas in 1999.<sup>2</sup>

Since its establishment, the Borja has considered bioethics exclusively within an anthropocentric medical and legal perspective, resulting in a rich list of publications.

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<sup>2</sup> Under her leadership, the Institute will become part of the *Ramon Llull University* in 2000.

Borja's "disadvantage" is the absence of a biocentrism perspective, evident in Abel's definition of bioethics:

Bioethics is the interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary study of ethical decision-making in the process of solving problems arising from different ethical systems due to the progress of medicine and biology that occur in the micro-social and macro-social, microeconomic and macroeconomic environment and their effects on society and its value system, both in the present and in the future. (Abel I Fabre, 2007, pp. 5-6).

There were some significant changes in the second period (1985–2000): new centers were founded, the first explicitly bioethical journals (as many as four) were launched, and a different perspective from Abel's emerged. An example is Diego Miguel Gracia Guillén (b. 1941) from Complutense University. The first teacher of Gracia was José Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955), who worked on the metaphysics of William James (1842–1910) and the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), as well as the tradition of neo-Kantians and Jesuits. Ortega y Gasset was, in the true sense, a "philosopher of life" and an existentialist, striving for the absolute truth as the sum of the perspectives of all individual lives while experiencing life as a drama of the interrelationship between the self and the environment.

Ortega y Gasset largely influenced the philosopher Xavier Zubiri (1898–1983) and Pedro Laín Entralgo (1908–2001), who was called the "last humanist" in Spain. Although he never used the term "bioethics", he dealt with medical ethics and anthropology (as well as literature, culture, history of medicine,<sup>3</sup> the university, contemporary Spain, and many other topics), writing about the virtue of friendship (sp. *amistad*), which Gracia, together with compassion, would later emphasize as the dominant value of Mediterranean bioethics (Spinsanti, 1995). Gracia is gradually abandoning the ratio-vitalism of Ortega y Gasset (sp. *razón vital*), the perfection of reason and the completeness of his perspectives, and the enlightened Christianocentrism of Zubiri and Laín Entralgo, asserting himself as the first secular Spanish bioethicist. His students would summarize the "rebellion" in the direction of a Europeanization of bioethics in six detected conflicts of traditions: 1) European rationalism, idealism, systematism, and deduction vs. Anglo-American empiricism, emotivism, and pragmatism; 2) virtues (Europe) vs. law (Anglo-America); 3) stoicism (Mediterranean), absence of private and "self" vs. utilitarianism (Anglo-America); 4) the authority of the state (changes come "from above"), which in southern Europe is more important than civil initiatives; 5) justice (Europe, but also South America, where the distribution of goods and other socioeconomic issues are the most problematic) vs. autonomy; and 6) the influence of Catholicism on life debates (e.g.,

<sup>3</sup> Apart from Complutense (Laín Entralgo and Gracia), Spanish historians of medicine were not interested in bioethics at the time.

abortion) is far greater in Europe than in the Anglo-American tradition (Sanchez-Gonzalez et al., 2014).

Besides Abel and Gracia, one of the pioneers of bioethics is Javier Gafo (1936–2001), a Jesuit and probably the most significant bioethics publicist in Spain. He dealt exclusively with topics such as cloning, abortion, or artificial insemination, and for most of his life, he was active at the Comillas Pontifical University in Madrid.

Various bioethical activities and approaches continued in the third period (after 2000). The politician and surgeon Marcelo Palacios Alonso (b. 1934) founded the International Society of Bioethics (SIBI) in 1997, and in 2000, he organized the “First World Conference on Bioethics” in Gijón. Although he turned to Potter’s global bioethics initiative, became a member of Potter’s “network”, encouraged the adoption of the Bioethics Declaration, proposed a law, and initiated naming a street in Gijón as »Professor Potter, the father of bioethics« (*Calle del Profesor Potter, Padre de la Bioética*), he remained mainly focused on biomedical topics.

A group of bioethicists also works at the Brothers Hospitallers of Saint John of God (they have been publishing the journal *Labor hospitalaria* since 1948); however, they mainly deal with palliative care. At the private University of Navarre, the bioethics school was founded by Gonzalo Herranz Rodríguez (1931–2021), a physician closely associated with the Catholic Church and Opus Dei, and the founder of the Spanish Association of Bioethics and Medical Ethics (AEBI). Nevertheless, his conservative traditionalist views did not prevent him from becoming interested in Fritz Jahr’s ideas towards the end of his life (Rinčić & Muzur, 2012; Rinčić & Muzur, 2019a).

In Spain, several other individuals developed a more modern and original approach. Among others, we should highlight Ramón Maria Nogués Carulla (born in Barcelona in 1937), Catalan biologist and emeritus of the Autonomous University of Barcelona (Department of Animal Biology, Plant Biology, and Ecology), who accepted the ideas of “wider” bioethics. Nogués has been primarily focused on neuroscience, but, as of 2003, he has been advocating the so-called “extended bioethics” (sp. *bioética ampliada*) by including the problems of animals, environment, climate, and water. J. M. Gómez-Heras, a theologian-philosopher educated partly at Complutense University and from 1995 to 2003 in Salamanca, held hospital courses on (medical) bioethics. After 2000, he began to publish on environmental ethics (García Gómez-Heras, 1997/2001). In 1990, he published the article “Ecology and Utopia” (*Ecología y utopía, hacia una ética del trato del hombre con la naturaleza*), in which he began using the term “bioethics” (previously, he was alternating between the terms “environmental ethics”, “ecoethics,” etc.). Gómez-Heras has admitted that “his approach deliberately

does not follow U.S. bioethics, but relies on three sectors of European philosophy – hermeneutics, philosophy of value, and ecology”<sup>4</sup>.

Although he has stated that he is familiar with the ideas of the American pioneers of bioethics, he prefers to refer to European thinkers such as Kant, Darwin, Hans Jonas, or Ernst Ulrich Michael von Weizsäcker (b. 1939), an environmentalist, politician, and co-chairman of the Club of Rome (2012–2018), known for forecasts that the 21st century would be the century of the environment.

It is typical for Spanish bioethics that even when we observe elements of biocentricity (Gómez-Heras or Nogués), they mainly deal with animals or ecology, but not plants, that is, life in all its forms. Some authors have been influenced by Potter (Palacios), but the influence of Fritz Jahr’s work remained quite absent. We attribute the introduction of Jahr to literature in Spain to the Colombian (admittedly, Spanish doctoral student) Ricardo Andrés Roa-Castellanos, who, in March 2011, participated in the first international conference on Jahr in Rijeka, Croatia. He later co-authored, along with Emanuele Valenti from The Institute of Clinical Ethics Francisco Vallés (Madrid), a chapter on Jahr in the textbook “Illustrated History of Bioethics” (Roa-Castellanos, Valenti & Márque Mendoza, 2015). In 2018, the Catalan physician Andreu Segura Benedicto was the first to use Fritz Jahr’s name in the title of an article (Segura Benedicto, 2018). In 2016, however, the Barcelona-based philosopher and lawyer Manuel Jesús López Baroni problematized Fritz Jahr’s ideas within a broader historical and epistemological context in his book (López Baroni, 2016).

The desire to move away from Anglo-Saxon pragmatism and empiricism in Spain led to the support of P. Kemp and J. Dahl Rendtorff’s attempts to Europeanize (American) principles (principles published by the Borja Institute), which later helped to articulate the specifics and potentials of “Latin” or Mediterranean bioethics: the significant role of character (honor, fame, nobility, sincerity, compassion, etc.); the role of trust in family and friends; less significance attributed to the question of who decides on the received information (therefore, entrenchment of paternalism); greater trust in doctors (proven by fewer complaints against doctors); centuries-old stoicism (based on ancient Greek and Christian traditions) – choosing happiness as a life goal (therefore, greater attachment to other people than to the material environment), anti-utilitarianism (contempt for practical solutions and applications), exaltation of life in accordance with nature and virtues, mistrust of the individual and private, tendency to meditate on life and death; greater importance attributed to professional norms than human rights (while the interest in social justice, as well as the late and imposed legislative recognition of patients’ rights, is explained by the long history of dictatorships denying the individual in favor of the social) (Sánchez González, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> E-mail correspondence from June 28, 2021.

## ITALY

There are two narratives about the beginning of bioethics in Italy by scholars who belong to the Catholic front and those who belong to the secular front. On the side of Catholics, in line with the thesis according to which a “movement” animated by the reflections of Catholic and Protestant moralist theologians would have paved the way for bioethics in North America, Giovanni Russo has affirmed that, also in Italy, the Magisterium of the Church and the work of Catholic centers have paved the way for bioethics. There would, therefore, be a “prehistory of bioethics”, which dates back to the 1950s and the pronouncements of Pius XII on issues regarding the beginning and end of life.

The narrative that we find in Maurizio Mori’s texts is of a different narrative. The beginning of bioethics is indeed marked by a phase that can be defined as movementist, or as Mori defines it, as a nascent or totipotent phase, as embryonic life, but as the sign of a break with traditional ethics, in particular, the value of human life. It was a fluid phase from the early 1970s to 1989, with many conferences and debates, but without official positions, schools, and models of bioethics (Mori, 1993).

In the diverse story scholars have given us of its early stages, Italian bioethics is marked by a characteristic dialectic: the confrontation/clash between Catholics and laypeople (Fornero, 2009; Fornero & Mori, 2012). The contrast between the different conceptions of human life has been at the heart of the Italian bioethical debate from the outset.

Indeed, there have been voices outside the choir, as well as outside the opposition, already since the first embryonic phase, such as the voice of Menico Torchio. He was probably the first in Europe (after Jahr) to use the term “bioethics” in the title of his article, *Rapporti uomo-Natura secondo le principali metafisiche orientali, loro implicazioni bioetiche ed ecologiche*, published in June 1972 (Torchio, 1972). There are various similarities between Torchio and Jahr<sup>5</sup> (Cf. Jahr, 1929; Jahr, 1934; Rinčić & Muzur, 2012; Torchio, 1984a), even though Jahr is never mentioned in Torchio’s

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<sup>5</sup> Firstly, Torchio’s article was published in the journal *Natura – rivista di scienze naturali* (just as in Jahr’s time it was *Kosmos – Handweiser für Naturfreunde und Zentralblatt für das naturwissenschaftliche Bildungs- und Sammelwesen*); secondly, the title of the article is similar to the subtitle of Jahr’s article (*Bio-Ethik: eine Umschau über die ethischen Beziehungen des Menschen zu Tier und Pflanze*); thirdly, in his article, Torchio advocates the recipes of Eastern metaphysics, and Jahr introduces examples of correct behavior toward the living world, the philosophy of Buddhism, yoga, and sankhya; fourth, in several places, Torchio mentions the understanding of ethics as a “force that resists the egoistic instinct”, and Jahr devoted another article to the “contrast and union” of egoistic and altruistic principles; fifth, Torchio uses the term “bioethical imperatives”, and, in several places, mentions the formulation from the Padma-Purana: “Do not do to others what you would not like to do to yourself”. These similarities should be added to Torchio’s later approach to Jahr in the early 1980s when he advocates “the need to expand our ethical obligations and embrace the most developed groups of animals, not only in the physical but also in the psychobiological sense”.



texts, nor is there any evidence that he was aware of him. For Potter, however, we have been told that Torchio received his book “Bioethics: Bridge to the Future” as a gift in 1972 from the director of his institute, C. F. Sacchi (Russo, 1995, p. 45). It is interesting to note that Torchio’s article *Lo stato di allarme* recalls, both in its title and content, themes of Potter’s text, using, among other things, the same metaphor of humanity as a “cancer of the whole biosphere” used by Potter. In the text “Bioethics: A Bridge to Survival”, published in *Natura* (Torchio, 1974), Potter is mentioned together with other authors such as Aldo Leopold and Albert Schweitzer (Torchio, 1982; 1984b). In one paper, Torchio (1995), as a final message, highlights his contribution to “naturalistic (and ecological) bioethics” (it. *bioetica naturalistica ed ecologica*), at least as dignified as “bioethics of creation” (it. *bioetica procreatica*), which is “trendy, maybe even too big” today, but unfortunately does not offer further elaboration. However, perhaps even more than Potter’s voice, Torchio’s remains isolated and surpassed by another way of approaching bioethics (Muzur & Rinčić, 2022).

Since the 1990s, we have had a more structured, institutional phase of bioethics in Italy. The Italian Committee for Bioethics (ICB) was established by a decree signed by the President of the Council of Ministers, with the task of expressing opinions, preparing legislative acts, and addressing the ethical and legal problems that may arise as a result of the progress in scientific research and technological applications on life. The first President and founder was Adriano Bompiani, who, due to his subsequent, constant commitment to the work of the ICB, is considered the main witness of its mission<sup>6</sup>.

The institutionalization of bioethics is also reflected in its presence in university teaching. The first university lecture on bioethics was introduced in the 1983/84 academic year at the Catholic University of Rome and held by Professor Elio Sgreccia<sup>7</sup>.

However, the soul of Italian bioethics is to be found above all in the activities of the various Centers that have sprung up since mid-1985, with the purpose of organizing activities in the fields of research, training, information, and documentation. These activities are associated with names such as Center, Laboratory, Project, or Institute. For uniformity purposes, we will use the term “Centers” in line with Viafora’s (1993) approach. Clinical bioethics is clearly prevalent, especially in many of the prominent Catholic and lay Bioethics Centers.

However, the trend towards a bioethics that is attentive to other species and the environment, which proceeds in the direction first indicated by Fritz Jahr and later

<sup>6</sup> A sentence by Bompiani is still on the NBC website to describe its mission (<https://bioetica.governo.it/en/>).

<sup>7</sup> Sgreccia insists on the “principles of personalist bioethics”: the fundamental value of life, the totality or therapeutic principle, freedom and responsibility, and sociability and subsidiarity.



by Van Potter, is present in some centers, such as the Bioethics Center of Genoa (*Centro di Bioetica di Genova*), the Italian Institute of Bioethics (*Istituto Italiano di Bioetica*), and the Italian Society of Bioethics (*Società Italiana di Bioetica*). An opening in that direction is also present in the Sicilian Institute of Bioethics (*Istituto Siciliano di Bioetica*) and the Bioethics Laboratory of Messina (*Laboratorio di Bioetica di Messina*).

Among the centers of Catholic inspiration, the Institute of Bioethics (*Istituto di Bioetica*) at the Catholic University of Rome plays an important role<sup>8</sup>. The vision of bioethics that inspires the activities of the Institute is ontologically founded personalism of Thomist inspiration. This perspective is applied to biomedical but also social issues, as is evident in the text by Elio Sgreccia, “Manual of Bioethics”, which has become a point of reference for Catholic-inspired bioethics (Sgreccia, 1988/2012). The Institute conducts multiple training activities, including the first specialization course in Bioethics (1989-90) and the first doctoral program in Bioethics (1991/92). The journal *Medicina e Morale* and the editorial series of *Scienza, medicina, etica* edited by Vita e Pensiero are connected to the Institute. The activity of the Institute continues today in the Section of the Department of Safety and Bioethics of the Catholic University of Rome, Bioethics and Medical Humanities (*Bioetica e Medical Humanities*), directed by Antonio G. Spagnolo. The section carries out research activities both on the classical issues of bioethics and emerging ones, extending its interest from clinical ethics issues to those concerning the area of biotechnology, the environment, and biolaw.

The Bioethics Center (*Centro di Bioetica*), which has been active at the Catholic University of Milan since 2007 (director Adriano Pessina), is also derived from the first Roman Bioethics Center. Starting in 2018, the Milanese Center has unified with the University Center for Life, based in Rome, merging into a single structure called the University Center for Bioethics and Life Sciences (*Centro di Ateneo di Bioetica e Scienze della Vita*), directed by Massimo Antonelli. In the new center, we notice a solid openness to the issues of social bioethics, in particular to disability, and the impact of new information technologies, robotics, and artificial intelligence.

Another important center of Catholic inspiration is located in Milan: The School of Medicine and Medical Humanities (*Scuola di Medicina e Medical Humanities*) of San Raffaele Hospital, founded in 1982 on the initiative of Don Luigi Verzé. It is one of the first Italian centers of research and training in the philosophy of medicine, ethics of medicine, bioethics, and medical humanities. Its vision of bioethics is inspired by personalist anthropology open to a pluralist dialogue with other visions. The School conducts multiple training activities, including the European Day of Bioethics. An

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<sup>8</sup> Established in 1985 as a Center of Bioethics, it became an Institute in 1992 under the direction of Elio Sgreccia.

Italian Society for Bioethics and Ethics Committees was set up at San Raffaele to coordinate the activities of Ethics Committees in Italy. The journals *Sanare Infirmos* and *Kos* and the editorial series of *Medicina e Scienze umane* edited by *Europea Scienze Umane Editrice* are connected to the School. From 1998 to 1999, only activities in the bioethical field were carried out by department scholars at an individual level.

Towards the end of the 1980s, in 1988, in Padua, as part of the research and training work of the Lanza Foundation, the Ethics and Medicine Project (*Progetto di Etica e Medicina*) was set in motion, with Paolo Benciolini in charge and Corrado Viafora as coordinator. The Project is committed to two objectives: the recognition of the orientations of contemporary bioethics, which has led to international meetings and study days on bioethics in Italy, and the activation of a Bioethics Laboratory for permanent training. The materials produced are collected in the *Quaderni di Etica e Medicina* series, edited by Gregoriana Editrice.

A vision of medical bioethics clearly prevails in all the Catholic-inspired Centers indicated up to now. The same view also prevails in a secular-inspired center that rises within *Politeia*, a non-profit association founded in 1983, intending to promote reflection on ethics and public choices. *Politeia*'s research programs are characterized by interdisciplinarity and adherence to methodological individualism and the theories of rational action. In 1985, the "Bioethics Section" (*Sezione di Bioetica*) was born, and Maurizio Mori has been its manager from the beginning to today. It was one of the first Italian research centers in this sector.

Since 2014, the University of Milan has been the headquarters of the Center, with Emilio D'Orazio as the director of the Study Center. Among *Politeia*'s publications, we wish to underscore *Il Manifesto di Bioetica laica*, published in *Notizie di Politeia* in 1996, for its impact on the Italian bioethical debate (D'Orazio & Mori, 1996).

Still, in its secular sphere, the Bioethics Consultation (*Consulta di Bioetica*) was founded in 1989 by the neurologist Renato Boeri. The Bioethics Consultation is a non-partisan association, not linked to any religious confession, which promotes the development of a secular debate on the ethical problems of medicine and the biological sciences from a pluralist perspective. Among its activities is the promotion, since 1990, of the Charter of Self-determination or "Biocard". Since 1993, the Bioethics Consultation has promoted the journal *Bioethics* as its official periodical.

The orientation toward medical bioethics is prevalent in both of these reference centers of secular bioethics, and it is centered on the questions of the beginning and end of life and the principle of autonomy.

However, there are also bioethics centers in Italy, both of secular and Catholic inspiration, which are more open to other areas of bioethics, such as animal, environmental, and social bioethics.

The Bioethics Center of Genoa (*Centro di Bioetica di Genova*) was founded in 1984 on the initiative of university professors from different research areas. Among the directors and the principal representatives, we find Luisella Battaglia<sup>9</sup>. The Center has a secular orientation and pursues a vision of bioethics that does not limit attention to human life but includes everything that is living and, by extension, also the environment.

The Italian Institute of Bioethics (*Istituto Italiano di Bioetica*), founded in Genoa in 1993 by Luisella Battaglia with the intention from the beginning to spread throughout Italy, shares the same vision of the Bioethics Center. Currently, the Institute is present in various Italian regions: Liguria, Campania, Sicily, Marche, Puglia, Emilia Romagna, Trentino Alto Adige, and Tuscany.

Attentive to the public ethics dimension of bioethics, the Institute has been carrying the organization of the School's Bioethics Days, dedicated to the training of young generations, in particular since 2001 under the patronage of the Italian Committee of Bioethics, and, since 2017, the Festival of Bioethics organized by the Ligurian Section with the patronage of the Italian Committee of Bioethics and aimed at activating the public debate on the main bioethical issues.

Even the Italian Society of Bioethics (*Società Italiana di Bioetica*), founded in 1987 at the Chair of Bioethics of the University of Florence by Brunetto Chiarelli, has a vision of bioethics that goes beyond the medical field and is clearly centered on global bioethics. Close to Potter<sup>10</sup> (Muzur & Rinčić, 2014, p. 49), but not entirely coincident with Potter's bioethics, this bioethics is conceived as a biological and naturalistic science with ecological relevance with the aim of survival.

Chiarelli edited the journal *Problemi di Bioetica* (1988–1991), from 1992 with the new name Global Bioethics, and in 1993 published the book *Bioethica Globale*, “which all testifies to the naturalistic and the anthropological distinction of bioethics

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<sup>9</sup> Luisella Battaglia did not know about Fritz Jahr until recently. However, he certainly caught her attention in the segment on spreading “imperatives” to plants (Luisella Battaglia, verbal communication, June 2017).

<sup>10</sup> We find traces of a relationship of great mutual respect between Chiarelli and Potter. In one of his letters, V. R. Potter complains that between 1970 and 1990, no one would recognize and follow him, so in 1988, “only one person in the whole world” noticed the book on global bioethics – Brunetto Chiarelli. In October 2000, Chiarelli animates Potter's associates to support Potter's candidacy for the Kyoto Prize and then, in March 2001, also launched an international campaign to try to make Potter a candidate for the Nobel Prize. Unfortunately, both initiatives were unsuccessful. In November 1991, Potter came to Chiarelli's conference in Trento, the last one he physically attended.

towards moral philosophy, medical deontology, and environmental ethics” (Chiarelli, 2000, p. 358).

An openness to animal and environmental bioethics themes can also be found in two Catholic-inspired centers. The first is the Sicilian Institute of Bioethics (*Istituto Siciliano di Bioetica*), founded in 1991 by Father Salvatore Privitera as an Institute of the Sicilian Theological Faculty. In 1998, it acquired its own autonomy, constituting itself as an association with two offices, Palermo and Acireale. The Institute’s purpose is characterized by its vocation for “Mediterranean bioethics”<sup>11</sup> (Cf. Privitera, 1996, p. 14), which, returning Sicily its vocation as a meeting point between different peoples and cultures, positions the Institute as a place of dialogue between Bioethics Centers and mediation between European and Mediterranean cultures. Without moving away from the fundamental positions of the Church, Privitera nevertheless carried forward an idea of Mediterranean bioethics attentive to promoting a higher quality of life. With his collaborator and successor, Salvino Leone, Privitera edited the journal *Bioetica e Cultura* (since 1992) and numerous other publications (among them the “Dictionary of Bioethics”, first edition in 1994, new edition in 2004), and, in 1995, he moved the Institute headquarters from the Faculty of Theology of the University of Palermo to Acireale (where a branch has been operating since January 1992).

The “Salvatore Privitera” Institute of Bioethics (*Istituto di Bioetica »Salvatore Privitera«*), founded in Palermo in 2007, a few years after the death of Father Privitera (Director Salvino Leone), is a direct subsidiary of the first, founded by Privitera. It maintains the same aims, as is also shown by the close similarity of the logo. The Institute publishes the journal “Bioethos” and is the owner of the publishing house *Il Platano di Ippocrate*.

Another clearly Catholic-inspired center, also active in Sicily and open to animal and environmental bioethics issues, was founded in 1993 in Messina: The Laboratory of Bioethics (*Laboratorio di Bioetica*). The Laboratory was set up as an internal research center of the Bioethics Committee of the Messina Catholic Doctors Association (Director Giovanni Pinizzotto), the committee responsible for the initiative of the Italian translation of Potter’s book “Bioethics. Bridge to the Future” (Potter, 2000). Later becoming an independent body, the Laboratory is based at the Theological Institute of St. Thomas of the Salesian Pontifical University. Its director has been from the beginning to today Giovanni Russo<sup>12</sup>, with the collaboration of Marianna Gensabella. The Bioethical vision underlying the Laboratory’s activities is based on the centrality of the human person, respect for human

<sup>11</sup> Privitera mentioned that the idea of Mediterranean bioethics was launched with the first issue of the journal *Bioetica e Cultura*, i.e., the first „Mediterranean meeting on bioethics“ in 1992.

<sup>12</sup> Giovanni Russo defended his thesis on the history of bioethics in Italy, becoming a professor at the Messina branch of the Salesian Pontifical University.

rights, and a Potterian, “global” perspective of bioethics. The Laboratory has given rise to the Higher School of Specialization in Bioethics and Sexology, in which two Masters in Bioethics and Sexology were born. Among the publications of the School of Bioethics and Sexology, the “Encyclopedia of Bioethics and Sexology”, edited by Giovanni Russo in 2004 and updated and expanded in 2018, holds a prominent place.

Also worth mentioning are two centers, no longer active, that focused their activities on social issues of particular relevance, addressing them from a bioethical perspective. The first was the International Family Studies Center (*Centro Internazionale di Studi sulla Famiglia*), founded by the Paulines. The second was the Bioethics Center-Gramsci Institute (*Centro di Bioetica dell'Istituto Gramsci*), established in 1988 within the Section of Theories and Methods of Science and the Section Philosophy of the Gramsci Foundation.

Lastly, we would like to mention the Inter-University Center for Bioethics Research (CIRB) (*Centro Interuniversitario di Ricerca Bioetica*), established in 1996 and involving several universities in Campania. The Center deals with ethical, psycho-sociological, and economic-legal issues connected with the development of biological and medical-surgical sciences and techniques concerning human beings, employing an interdisciplinary approach while also considering environmental protection. The current director is Andrea Patroni Griffi.

Finally, two other recently established University Centers deserve to be mentioned. The first is the University Center of Bioethics (UCB) (*Centro Universitario di Studi Bioetici*), an interdepartmental research center at the University of Parma (Director Antonio D'Aloja). Established in June 2016 on the Department of Law, Political, and International Studies initiative, the Center's mission is to promote interdisciplinary comparisons on advances in medicine and scientific research in various fields, ranging from health care to biotechnology, environmental policy, and sustainability.

The second is the University Center for Bioethics Studies (CE.S.B.) (*Centro Universitario di Studi di Bioetica*), established in 2019 at the University of Messina (President Marianna Gensabella, Director Stefano Agosta). The Center aims to promote research, training, critical discussion, and dissemination in the field of bioethics. The vision of bioethics that underlies the activities ranges from clinical bioethics to animal and environmental bioethics, also paying attention to the interrelationships of bioethics with related interdisciplinary areas such as biopolitics, biolaw, bioeconomy, and bioinformatics.

In conclusion, with this brief overview of the activities of the Bioethics Centers in Italy, we can observe that even if the orientation towards medical bioethics appears prevalent, especially in the initial phase, there is also a broader, global vision of bioethics. A broader vision of bioethics, aimed at the care of every living being and the ecosystem in its entirety, allows for a greater space for dialogue and comparison between different ethical orientations but, at the same time, burdens bioethics with

further challenges. The challenge of global bioethics is the new, difficult perspective towards which Italian bioethics, with its centers, is taking its first steps today.

## CROATIA<sup>13</sup>

The Catholic Church was among the first to embrace Potter's "invention" of bioethics (even if we discount the role of the Church in establishing the Kennedy Institute, the National Catholic Bioethics Center was established in Philadelphia as early as 1972), seeing in bioethics a new way of promoting old Church teachings. The Church simply could not allow the major issues of its doctrines to be discussed without its involvement<sup>14</sup> (Aramini, 2009; Meilaender, 2005) but also saw an interesting opportunity to enter a debate that had previously been reserved only for medical ethicists (i.e., physicians) (Pozaić, 1987). It is, therefore, unsurprising that in Croatia as well, the Jesuit Valentin Pozaić was the first to use the term "bioethics" in the spring of 1985 (Pozaić, 1985a; 1985b).<sup>15</sup> A year later, Pozaić founded the Center for Bioethics at the Philosophical-Theological Institute of the Society of Jesus in Zagreb<sup>16</sup>. The main idea of Pozaić's initiative was that medical ethics no longer manages to cover all the issues related to health, disease, and death. As an answer, a new interdisciplinary profession has emerged: "bioethics".

Independent of theologians, another line of bioethics development in Croatia has been established by lawyers. By entering this field, due to his interest in human rights, Nenad Hlača from the Faculty of Law in Rijeka started publishing on bioethical topics as early as 1990 (Hlača, 1990a; 1990b; 1993). In the same year, the Hastings Center of New York organized the second "East-West Bioethics Conference"<sup>17</sup> in Dubrovnik. The first was held in Pécs in Hungary in 1989 (Donnelley, 1990; Hlača, 1998). Nikola Visković, a Professor at the Faculty of Law in Split, expressed an interest in bioethics and biolaw (Visković, 1995). However, starting from his interest in animal law and ethics, in which he is a pioneer in Croatia, he developed the concept of cultural zoology, first introduced in the voluminous feuilleton "Animal and Man" (Cro. *Životinja i čovjek*) (1990–1991) published in the *Slobodna Dalmacija* newspaper. This served as the basis for the book of the same title (Visković, 1996).

<sup>13</sup> Some of the ideas formulated in the following section have been exploited in Rinčić & Muzur, 2011.

<sup>14</sup> The Christian vision of bioethics is dominant in numerous publications.

<sup>15</sup> For a more complete bibliography of V. Pozaić, see: Šestak, 2005. Although Pozaić published two articles on similar topics as early as December 1984, he did not explicitly mention bioethics in them (Pozaić, 1984a, 4; 1984b, 4).

<sup>16</sup> The Center for Bioethics – Institute of Philosophy and Theology of the Society of Jesus (<http://www.bioetika.ftidi.hr/bioetika.htm>).

<sup>17</sup> Hlača claims that this was the first mention of "bioethics" in Croatian academic circles; however, as we know, this is not accurate.

He also developed a similar concept of cultural botany, synthesized in the book “Tree and Man” (Cro. *Stablo i čovjek*) (Visković, 2001). Both concepts make the all-encompassing case of human relationship towards animals and plants, showing the various ways in which human culture depends on non-human living beings, but also making an implicit claim that ethical and legal protection of non-human living beings cannot be comprehensive without (what will later in Croatia develop as a pluri-perspective) reflection of this complex relationship (Guć, 2021).

In Zagreb, the bioethical-legal perspective has been broadened by Ksenija Turković, an expert in criminal law and a victimologist known for her studies of euthanasia (Turković, 2006; Turković, Roksandić Vidlička & Maršavelski, 2010), and whose work has been continued by her students Sunčana Roksandić-Vidlička and others.

In about 1995, the bioethical debate was joined by philosophers from Rijeka. Elvio Baccarini has published on euthanasia, abortion, organ transplantation, cloning, etc. (Baccarini, 1998a; 1998b; 1998c; 1998d; 1999; 2000; 2002; 2006; 2008; Czerny Urban & Baccarini, 2010) Snježana Prijić-Samaržija mostly on abortion (Prijić, 1995; Prijić-Samaržija, 1997; 1999a; 1999b; 2000; 2002; 2004; 2008; 2011), Neven Petrović translated Peter Singer’s book “Animal Liberation” (1998),<sup>18</sup> etc. Baccarini also published the book *Bioetica: Analisi filosofiche liberali* (Bioethics: A Liberal Philosophical Analysis) and, together with S. Prijić-Samaržija, “Practical Ethics: Essays in a Liberal Approach to Certain Problems of Practical Ethics” (*Praktična etika: ogledi iz liberalnoga pristupa nekim problemima praktične etike*).

In the former Yugoslavia, after the establishment of the first (hospital) ethical committees in the 1970s (Borovečki, Mustajbegović & Vrhovac, 2010), the pioneers of medical ethics and human rights were Pavel Gregorić and Slobodan Lang, when a center for medical ethics<sup>19</sup> was established at the “Andrija Štampar” School of Public Health, as well as an annual workshop at the Inter-University Centre in Dubrovnik (Ten Have, Borovečki & Orešković 2005). At approximately the same time, the then Head of the Institute for Forensic Medicine at the Faculty of Medicine in Rijeka, Branko Volarić (1927–1982), started to prepare a course in medical ethics in collaboration with Ivan Šegota, the then Head of the Department of Social Sciences at the same faculty. However, due to Volarić’s death, this idea would come to life in Rijeka only a decade later.

Ivan Šegota was a journalist with a typical journalist’s instinct for the new (Muzur, 2012; Rinčić, 2009). A high-level politician of the Yugoslav communist era, he taught Marxism and the theory and practice of socialist self-management at the

<sup>18</sup> Peter Singer’s “Practical Ethics” was translated into Croatian five years later by Tomislav Bracanović and published by *KruZak*.

<sup>19</sup> Yugoslav Centre for Medical Ethics and Quality of Life (established in 1982).



Faculty of Medicine in Rijeka from 1976. He traveled to Washington, where he discovered bioethics at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University; he then returned to Rijeka and introduced courses on medical ethics at the Faculty of Medicine (“The Hippocratic Oath Today”). The term “bioethics” was first used in the title of a course in 1993/1994 (“An Introduction to Bioethics”, an elective course offered in the first year of Medicine) (Šegota, 2005; 2008). In the following years, other Croatian universities have followed Rijeka’s path (Gosić, 2000).

Ivan Šegota was co-founder, the first president (2000–2004),<sup>20</sup> and later honorary president of the Croatian Bioethical Society. He also co-founded the International Society for Clinical Bioethics (2003) and the Croatian Society for Clinical Bioethics (2005).

Influenced by the Catholic Church, the Zagreb Faculty of Medicine introduced a medical ethics course in 1995/1996 (Zurak, 2010). This more conservative approach was led by the neurologist Niko Zurak, editor of the university textbook *Medical Ethics (Medicinska etika)* (Zurak, 2007), who for a long time resisted the term “bioethics” (Matulić, 2005, p. 176).

Ana Borovečki from the “Andrija Štampar” School of Public Health in Zagreb might be considered a follower of Slobodan Lang and Niko Zurak. Borovečki has taken over part of the medical ethics lectures at the Faculty of Medicine in Zagreb and published several manuals (Borovečki & Sass, 2008; Borovečki & Mustajbegović, 2010; Borovečki & Lang, 2010; Borovečki, 2003). Like Stella Fatović-Ferenčić, Ana Borovečki was also a student of Biserka Belicza (1942–2005), a historian of medicine and ethicist. These three scholars brought the “Zurak line” and its influence to the Faculty of Medicine at Josip Juraj Strossmayer University in Osijek.

The first major bioethics symposia in Croatia took place in the late 1990s: “Bioethics – Ethical Challenges of Science and Society” – Department of Sociology at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb, October 1997 (Cifrić, 1998), “7<sup>th</sup> Days of Frane Petrić” – Croatian Philosophical Society, Cres, August/September 1998 (Čović, 2000), “Bioethics in Theory and Practice” – Croatian Medical Association et al., Zagreb, December 1998 (Kurjak & Silobričić, 2001), “Informed Consent in European Reality” – Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Zagreb, February 1999, and “Bioethical Aspects of Genetic Engineering” – Croatian Peasant Party, Zagreb, April 1999. At the beginning of the new millennium, annual conferences (mostly with international participation) were established in Rijeka (“Rijeka Days of Bioethics”) in 2000 and on the island of Lošinj (“Lošinj

<sup>20</sup> Later presidents were Nikola Skledar (2004–2008), Ante Čović (2008–2012), Amir Muzur (2012–2016), and Hrvoje Jurić (since 2016).

Days of Bioethics”)<sup>21</sup> in 2002<sup>22</sup>. Conferences in other locations have been held only occasionally<sup>23</sup>.

The founder of the Lošinj Days of Bioethics, an event that has become the leading bioethical conference in Croatia, is Ante Čović. By insisting on abandoning the “new medical ethics”, Čović systematically promoted “integrative bioethics” as a discipline that starts with open dialogue from various scientific and non-scientific perspectives (“pluri-perspectivism”) and results in an integrated platform of “orientation knowledge”<sup>24</sup>. Integrative bioethics, as an original intellectual contribution to the content and methodology of bioethics, opened the door for Čović’s group to new collaborations: first with Thomas Sören Hoffmann from Bonn and later with Walter Schweidler from Bochum/Eichstätt. A joint project resulted in a series of summer schools and conferences.

Čović invited scholars from almost all the countries of South-East Europe (Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Albania) to join the project of establishing a joint master’s program in integrative bioethics. In 2006, he founded the Referral Centre for Bioethics in South-East Europe. In 2011, Čović obtained approval for a project from the University of Zagreb aimed at establishing a centre of excellence and a doctoral program in integrative bioethics, and the actual Scientific Centre of Excellence for Integrative Bioethics was established by a decision of the Minister of Science, Education, and Sports in November 2014. It is possible that one day, the major contribution of Ante Čović, besides conceiving and promoting integrative bioethics, will be seen in his systematic mentoring and education of young scholars, students, and doctoral candidates who have spread bioethical ideas to other academic institutions and public forums, and in their publishing activities (e.g., Ivana Zagorac, Marija Selak, and others).

Hrvoje Jurić, the first associate and student of Ante Čović, provided a significant theoretical basis for integrative bioethics by revisiting V. R. Potter’s ideas and finding that there were precursor values in them. Jurić also contributed significantly to the popularization of bioethics by organizing public colloquia.

In the autumn of 2008, at a time when the Rijeka Department of Social Sciences had achieved wide recognition by taking on the organization of the 9<sup>th</sup> World Congress

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<sup>21</sup> Several recent conferences have also included thematic round table discussions and student sections.

<sup>22</sup> The establishment of the “Lošinj Days of Bioethics” conference was preceded by the symposium entitled “Bioethics and Science in the New Epoch”, which was held in September 2001 in Mali Lošinj as part of the “10th Frane Petrić Days” conference. This conference is remembered for the video message by V. R. Potter. For more details on the importance of the conference, see Zagorac & Jurić (2008).

<sup>23</sup> For example, the Scientific and expert meeting with international participants “Neuroethics: Between Bioethics and Neuroscience”, Karlovac, June 9, 2017.

<sup>24</sup> For a more precise definition, see Čović (2007) and Jurić (2007).

of Bioethics (3–8 September 2008, Rijeka/Opatija), Ivan Šegota retired and was succeeded by Amir Muzur as the Head of the Department. After 14 years under Muzur's leadership, the Department (now renamed the Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities) has developed a closer collaboration with Čović's group and has oriented itself more towards the study of the life and work of Fritz Jahr. In May 2010, the first issue of the *Jahr* journal appeared. The "Fritz Jahr and European Roots of Bioethics: Establishing an International Scholars' Network (*EuroBioNethics*)" project, supported by the Croatian Science Foundation (February–July 2011), made it possible for leading scientists in the field of European bioethics from Europe, the USA, and South America to meet in Rijeka (in March 2011) and participate at a conference on the new momentum in the development of bioethics in general. The proceedings of the conference were published in the *Jahr* journal, and later (in April 2012), together with the articles of other invited authors, in the book "Fritz Jahr and the Foundations of Global Bioethics: The Future of Integrative Bioethics", which was edited by Amir Muzur and Hans-Martin Sass and published by Lit Verlag of Münster. The project also resulted in a series of invitations for Iva Rinčić and Amir Muzur to give lectures at universities and conferences in the region (Rijeka, Mali Lošinj, Zagreb, Banja Luka, Travnik, Belgrade, Novi Sad, Ohrid), and the organization of a special section on Fritz Jahr and the "new bioethics" as part of the 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Clinical Ethics and Consultations (São Paulo, Brazil, May 2012). Muzur and Rinčić were also invited to hold a lecture at a conference dedicated to Fritz Jahr, which took place on 28 and 29 November 2012 in Halle and was organized by the German-Polish Science Foundation (Muzur & Rinčić, 2014). Another result of the *EuroBioNethics* project was the signing and publication of the "Rijeka Declaration on the Future of Bioethics" in several magazines and websites in Croatia, India (Byk et al., 2011), Venezuela (Roa-Castellanos et al., 2011), and Argentina (Lima, 2011). The declaration stipulates the most important values of the discipline and promotes Jahr's legacy.

From 2014 to 2017, the Department implemented another project of the Croatian Science Foundation: "European Bioethics in Action – EuroBioAct". This resulted in a list of about a hundred "bioethical standards" aimed at optimizing the relationship of people towards their own health, plants, and animals, which was harmonized with stakeholders from three local self-government units in the Northern Adriatic: Bakar, Kršan, and Mali Lošinj (Miloš & Doričić, 2017). The last active project, entitled "EuroBioMed: From the diversity of traditions to a common Euro-Mediterranean bioethical platform – constructing a tool for dialogue and action" (2021–2024), aims to explore the similarities and differences among the major cultures of the European Mediterranean and shape a platform that would open up new possibilities in that region for bioethical reflection and action concerning the protection of human health and the environment as well as the relations towards the animals and plants.

With regard to the general course of the development of bioethics in Croatia, in the way that it has been presented in this chapter, one can notice a striking diversity and productivity within a relatively small geographical area. The reason for this diversity remains rather unclear. It might be that, typically for Eastern European “transition” countries (that live in a “post-communist chaos”, Čović, 2006), many intellectuals have searched for a new niche within social sciences and humanities after the fall of state-subsidized Marxism (Kukoč, 2007; Marinčić & Čović, 2012). Another reason could be the fact that bioethics, unlike other disciplines, has proven to be open to individuals of different professional and intellectual backgrounds and experiences. However, these reasons do not explain why bioethics has developed far more slowly in other countries in the region (Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Albania), where it has been limited to only a group or two of researchers. It is, therefore, far more probable that the old truth “a person makes a project” has once again proven to be true. The fascinating level of activities in Croatian bioethics might be ascribed primarily to the enthusiasm of two people: Ivan Šegota and Ante Čović. Their energy, which has dominated Croatian bioethics for two consecutive periods, has sparked innovative intellectual processes and attracted both academic and non-academic groups from Croatia and all over South-East Europe to bioethics (Rinčić & Muzur, 2011).

## **A CRITICAL INTERMEZZO: SPAIN-ITALY-CROATIA**

There are many common bioethical initiatives that continue to mark the bioethics of the 20th and 21st centuries in Croatia, Italy, and Spain. First of all, these nations are dominated by the Catholic tradition, which influences their ideas even when it comes to thinkers of different worldviews and origins. Secondly, these three nations – judging by the bioethical literature, as well as others – are extremely inclined to dialogue and writing about history (their own, and to some extent others). In Spain, there are several versions of the history of bioethics – primarily domestic and Latin American<sup>25</sup>, as well as in Italy, with recapitulations after twenty or twenty-five years (Galletti, 2009; Russo, 1995; 1997; Viafora, 1990). In Croatia, there is one doctoral thesis (Jeličić, 2016) and several articles with the ambition of synthesis (Gosić, 1999; 2009; Kantar & Svržnjak, 2007; Rinčić & Muzur, 2011; Tomašević, 2013; Valković, 1997; Zagorac & Jurić, 2008). Admittedly, in contrast to Spain and Croatia, where explicitly bioethical journals are rarer, such journals are noticeably more common in Italy. It is no wonder that, in coexistence with Georgetown bioethics, precisely in

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<sup>25</sup> Although interesting, these histories are not always reliable: one of them “found” a photograph of Fritz Jahr, gave him the title of “university professor”, and renamed the newer authors as “Veacht” (instead of *Veach*) or “Hengelhardt” (instead of *Engelhardt*) (Cf. Roa-Castellanos et al., 2015).

the climate of the northwestern quadrant of the Mediterranean, its incompleteness or inadequacy was first and most clearly detected, as well as that its autochthonous versions began to be articulated there: in Madrid and Sicily, the idea of Mediterranean bioethics, and in Croatia the integrative and renewed Jahr's and Potter's bioethics.

Certainly, there are some key differences in the background of these variations. Thus, Salvatore Privitera sees the typicality of "his" Mediterranean bioethics not only in:

The existence in that region of some health problems such as, for example, thalassemia, but in the *Mediterranean* solution of these problems, that is, in the common finding of solutions to our problems within the framework of cultural, ideological and religious conditions that are present in that area. (Privitera, 1996, p. 16)

The Maltese George Grima, following the thinking of D. Callahan, advocates the necessity of forming cultural bioethics as opposed to normative ones, emphasizing, for example, the concepts of honor, hospitality, or relationship to the environment (Agnoletti, 2014), which play significant roles in Mediterranean culture (Grima, 1996).

## GREECE

Unlike what happens in other countries, in Greece, we can distinguish three phases of Bioethics: the Classical period, the Byzantine-Christian period, and the contemporary era. As Eleni Kalokairinou has pointed out, Bioethics not in the strict sense as the ethical study of medical developments and technologies, but in some wider sense as the ethics and deontology of medicine, first appeared in classical antiquity (Kalokairinou, 2012). Moreover, as she has further claimed, in antiquity, the origins of Bioethics and Medical ethics have to be sought in the origins of medicine. In other words, together with the origins of medicine, one can trace the beginnings of Bioethics in whatever form, whether religious or philosophical-ethical. As she has brought out, medicine is an old hypothesis. In Greece, it appears in two forms. First, there were physicians-healers who did not have any formal medical knowledge but moved from town to town and offered their services to those who needed them. Among them were the soothsayers and augurs who could tell from the weather forecast, the flight of the birds, and the entrails of animals that were sacrificed to gods, which practice in general, and not medical practice in particular, had to be applied for the cure of the disease or the catharsis of the plague that had befallen the town (Kalokairinou, 2022).

Bioethics normally flourishes in places and countries where medicine first appeared and developed. We realise, therefore, that, in Classical Greece, we have, first of all, the appearance of practical medicine, which has been very much influenced by religion.

It is hence understood why the first phase of medical ethics and bioethics received an equally religious character. We can, therefore, argue that the first phase of bioethics in classical antiquity was mainly religious.

The first phase of deontology and medical ethics lasts roughly from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. At the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C., we have the appearance of the first philosophers, the pre-socratic philosophers, and, at the same time, of rational medicine. During this period, philosophy and medicine were related since the first philosophers, the pre-socratics, were physicians at the same time. This is why philosophers, historians of medicine, and philologists raise the sensible question of whether philosophy came from medicine or medicine from philosophy. Hippocrates was the most famous physician of antiquity for a number of reasons. He, first of all, distinguished medicine from philosophy. As he pointed out, medicine does need to justify its first principles as philosophy does. He claimed that while philosophy is interested in studying human nature, medicine is interested in studying this particular human nature. However, Hippocrates also introduced medical ethics and deontology as forerunners of bioethics in antiquity. Without exaggeration, if Fritz Jahr was the first European bioethicist, then Hippocrates was the medical ethicist (in modern terms, bioethicist) of antiquity. Among the sixty treatises he wrote, it would be an omission not to mention the deontological treatises he composed: *The Oath, the Physician, Law, Decorum, Precepts on Ancient Medicine* (Hippocrates/transl. Jones, 1984).

During the Byzantine period (330-1453), the Perception of medicine and the development of medical ethics were decisively influenced by Christian teaching. By moving the capital from Rome to New Rome, which later took his name (Constantinople), Constantine the Great marked the beginning of the Byzantine Empire, which he linked to the Church and the Christian faith. Thus, the understanding of medical ethics during this period essentially coincides with the approach of the Eastern Fathers of the Church.

Medical science is basically understood during this period as a gift from God due to the weakness of human nature and is often presented by the Church Fathers as a pattern for the healing of the soul: as a man takes care of his health, in the same way, he should care for his ethical and spiritual life. Furthermore, as he tolerates and endures surgeries or medication when they are considered necessary for his therapy, he should also accept the spiritual treatment that is necessary for his spiritual health. The correlation between medical treatment and spiritual life is actually very common in the patristic tradition. The references to medical practices, treatment difficulties, physical pain, and the agony of the patients and their relatives about the outcome of the disease are numerous and serve a dual purpose: on the one hand, to support

spiritually the patients in order to help them face the disease with confidence in God and generally in a way that accords to Christian ethics and, on the other hand, to make good use of the experience they gained through this challenge in order to teach them about the spiritual cure of the soul's own passions and the acquisition of spiritual health.

Patients are called not to underestimate the initial symptoms of a disease and are encouraged to seek treatment on time, as it becomes more difficult to handle when the disease is spread. Just as the fever does not initially afflict the patient but may become extremely threatening if left untreated, so too can the various passions of the soul develop slowly and appear to be harmless initially but become threatening to the spiritual life.

Doctors are called to treat patients with a sense of responsibility and to do whatever is necessary for their cure. At that time, it was common medical practice not to reveal to the patients the true condition of their health in order not to become disappointed and collapse psychologically or even for them to accept the necessary treatment more easily. And, while Christian Ethics does not accept using illegitimate means for good purposes, this medical practice has been nevertheless evaluated positively by the Church Fathers. John Chrysostom accepts this kind of deceit, observing that doctors not only rely on their scientific knowledge but, due to the unwilling attitude of some patients that may be aggravated by the suffering they endure, the former are occasionally obliged to use deception as a means to convince the latter to accept the necessary treatment (Chrysostom, n.d.). Origenes has also the same opinion and compares the attitude of the doctor to his patient with the attitude of a father toward his child (Origenes, n.d.).

Finally, the relatives are called to show their affection to the patient and support them in any necessary way. The Church Fathers acknowledge this to be a daunting task since many patients express complaints to the people who take care of them, attributing to them responsibilities and a number of problems they create with their behaviour. The relatives are praiseworthy as they do not get upset with the patient and keep taking care of him with patience and love.

The above-mentioned has made it clear that, in the orthodox tradition, human weakness before pain and disease is considered natural and understandable and that the value of medicine is appreciated as a gift from God. Precisely because medicine is fully accepted, it is projected as an exemplary model for the cultivation of the faithful's spiritual health as well. The patristic views regarding the intimate relationship between doctor and patient are not an attempt to formulate a Christian approach to medical ethics; they accept the model of paternalistic medicine that has been dominant since the time of Hippocrates, in which decision-making is primarily the responsibility of the physician, who is called upon to do



what is necessary for the well-being of the patient. This model is actually familiar with the theological perspective since God Himself is understood and called Father, and all people are his children. Furthermore, clergymen are spiritual fathers who advise and guide the faithful spiritually. However, the Church Fathers' advice is addressed not only to doctors, who have a dominant role in the paternalistic model, but to patients and relatives as well. This occurs because all of them are called upon to show their faith in God and care for their suffering fellow man (Vantsos, 2019, p. 275).

Caring for the sick was not only a matter of prayer but also of taking action to help those in need. After the end of the persecutions and the establishment of the Byzantine Empire, the Church's work was supported by the state and was further developed. Many Church Fathers could be named here, whose life and activities bear witness to Christian philanthropy, each in his own way. Special mention here is awarded to Basil the Great, who, in his service as bishop, was able to pursue new paths in the organisation of Christian philanthropy. His deeds serve as an example and inspiration for philanthropic facilities, even in later times. As the Bishop of Caesarea, he financed a monastery complex in the diocese with diverse philanthropic facilities known as »Basilias«. The complex consisted of houses for the poor, hostels for travellers, which could also accommodate pack animals and escorts, and hospitals for the care of the sick with proper doctors and attendants, as well as wards for lepers (Basil the Great, n.d.). Basil the Great saw the complex as a place of active charity and believed that the rejection of God's will and the absence of love generates suffering, which is healed through the practice of the love of fellow man (Constantelos, 1991). John Chrysostom also founded several hospitals in Constantinople at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century. Christian institutions like these provided the initial impulse for the state to create hospices in cooperation with the Church and to expand these institutions into hospitals (el. νοσοκομεία) (Vantsos & Kiroudi, 2007). According to available sources, in the fifth century, more than a hundred hospitals worked in the major cities and the Empire's capital (Józsa, 2011). This cooperation between the Church and the state can be clearly demonstrated in the example of the Pantocrator Monastery in Constantinople (Kofinas, 2003).

In the modern period, some important observations can be made concerning the development of Bioethics in contemporary Greece. First of all, three kinds of thinkers-scientists who have engaged with Bioethics can be distinguished: theologians, legal scientists, and philosophers. We can easily detect the Christian religion's influence on contemporary medicine and bioethics, as this has continued since the Byzantine-Christian era. One of the figures who first engaged with contemporary Bioethics in Greece was Georgios Manzaridis, Professor of Christian Ethics at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (now retired). In his writings, he took a critical approach to contemporary Bioethics, characterizing it as the ethics of globalization since bioethics seems to be a continuously changing ethics without

any solid principles. He argued for principled Bioethics and presented orthodox Bioethics based on Christian anthropology and the dignity of the human person.

One of his students is Miltiadis Vantsos, also a professor at the Faculty of Theology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, who has followed him, among other things, in his teachings in Bioethics and has greatly contributed to this field with his many activities. Among his publications are the following books: “Ethical Considerations of Abortion” (in Greek) from 2009, “The Sanctity of Human Life. Presentation and Evaluation of the Teaching of the Roman Catholic Church on Bioethics from the Point of View of Orthodox Ethics” (in Greek) from 2010, “Thessaloniki” from 2010, and “The Scientifically Feasible and the Ethically Right. Views of Orthodox Bioethics” (in Greek) from 2016.

At the same time, the Orthodox Church of Greece, through its own Bioethics Committee, has been promoting the public dialogue by ensuring medical information, introducing the spiritual aspect of bioethical problems, and influencing the state when passing laws within the interest circle of the Church (Hatzinikolaou, 2011).

This coincided with the activities of legal scientists, who showed an early interest in bioethics issues. Mrs Ismini Kriari, Professor of Constitutional Law and ex-Rector of the Panteion University of Athens (recently ret.), participated in European conferences as early as the 1990s and expressed an intense interest in the problems of Bioethics and Medical Technologies. In this respect, some of her noteworthy publications include: “Biomedical Developments and Constitutional Law: Constitutional Issues Regarding the Methods of Assisted Reproduction and the Applications of Genetics”, published in 1994 (in Greek), and “Genetic Technology and Fundamental Rights”, published in 1999 (in Greek).

At the same time, philosophers and, in particular, ethicists started getting interested in Bioethics. Among the more prominent Kantian authors is certainly Stavroula Tsinorema, a philosopher from the University of Crete, who mainly deals with the methodological and epistemological aspects of bioethics.

Eleni Kalokairinou, a bioethicist who previously worked at the University of Cyprus in Cyprus and then at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (now retired), is one of the few to promote bioethics different from Georgetown. She participated in the first international conference on Fritz Jahr and European bioethics in Rijeka in 2011 and then made contributions to two Lit editions about Jahr (she translated Jahr’s article from 1926 into Greek, as well as the Rijeka Declaration on the Future of Bioethics). In addition, she has numerous publications covering a wide range of topics in bioethics. Among her publications are the following books: “A Critical Examination of Stoic Moral Philosophy” (2008), “Introduction to Bioethics. Historical and Systematic Approaches” (in Greek) from 2014, and “The Embryo, the Gestational Mother and the Limits of Reproductive Autonomy” (in Greek) from 2019.

Another prominent Greek philosopher bioethicist is Evangelos D. Protopapadakis, a philosopher from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and a member of the Hellenic National Commission for Bioethics and Technoethics, who discusses bioethical issues mainly from the Kantian perspective. Since, in his view, Kantian ethics is more suitable for discussing how the key bioethical principles could be implemented with regard to issues such as cloning by questioning the alleged infringement of a clone's right to uniqueness (Protopapadakis, 2013), doping in sports, deciding on the moral justification of medical enhancement (Protopapadakis, 2020), moral enhancement, discussing the existence of a duty to enhance our species (Protopapadakis, 2017), the use of wearables in children (Panayiotou & Protopapadakis, 2022), and procreative beneficence (Savulescu & Protopapadakis, 2019). He also participated in a conference on bioethics in 2019 in Mali Lošinj and Osijek.

## **FROM RESEARCH LIMITATION TO PROGRESSION, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSION**

The identification of “Mediterranean” with “Latin” seeks a foothold in the Greek-Latin-Judeo-Christian philosophical and cultural matrix that was not so much affected by the influence of the Enlightenment. In his doctoral thesis, José Mazuelos Pérez (b. 1960, physician and theologian, bishop of Jerez de la Frontera) tried to analyze the bioethical concepts of D. Gracia and H. T. Engelhardt (as two authors who advocate lay bioethics based on Georgetown principles, but aware of the necessity of their upgrading) and find the arguments in support of Mediterranean bioethics. In the conclusions of this confrontation, one of the main differences between the “Mediterranean man” according to the (Anglo-Saxon) pragmatist, rootedness in history, and the search for truth was highlighted:

Mediterranean man is a man of history, he has roots in history, he knows how to see history/story behind him. Today, in actuality, it is important to engage in pragmatic reflection; history says nothing or has been overcome since, according to the pragmatic idea, truth changes over time.

Among the other assumed characteristics of Mediterranean bioethics, Mazuelos Pérez mentioned the connection of ethics with metaphysics (with the consequent belief that there are universal/absolute moral obligations that are not affected by customs, such as respect for life as the highest personal value), the emphasized social dimension of man (including the common good, solidarity, family, etc.), etc. Although Mazuelos Pérez's analysis is interesting in many ways and emphasizes the necessity of a lay approach, the conclusions openly resist pluralism by “pulling” toward the typically Catholic value of the sanctity of life. Unlike the Spanish bioethical scene, which, as we have seen, is stretched in a narrower range from the Catholic-Georgetown to the liberal-Catholic position, a greater variety of bioethical

approaches and perspectives can be found in Italy and Croatia, thus guaranteeing a better opportunity for a future formation of (wider) Mediterranean bioethics (Rinčić & Muzur, 2019b; Muzur & Rinčić, 2019b).

It is important not to ignore other countries and cultures surrounding the Mediterranean. Mallia (2012) argues that omitting any Mediterranean nation when discussing bioethics is politically incorrect, noting that Mediterranean bioethics often skews Eurocentric, primarily focusing on the northern and central regions. The essence of Mediterranean bioethics lies in addressing complex issues at the intersection of religious, cultural, and traditional moral frameworks, where perspectives on topics like the interpretation of Deity, the beginning and end of life, abortion, and many other (bio)ethical topics may vary significantly (Mallia, 2012).

While emphasizing the need to harmonize Mediterranean cultures and traditions, this article specifically focuses on four European countries regarded as significant within this discourse. Of course, this is not a deviation from Mallia's idea because we have written about "neglected" countries elsewhere. However, each of those four has made notable contributions to the development of broader, non-mainstream bioethics in other countries of the Mediterranean. Greece, recognized as the birthplace of medical ethics, has the oldest tradition, with an intriguing relationship between Orthodox religious ethics and lay bioethics. Croatia, in partnership with Germany, has promoted integrative bioethics rooted in Fritz Jahr's ideas, leading to the establishment of a scientific journal with a distinct European bioethics orientation. Italy, characterized by a dynamic blend of Catholic and lay bioethical approaches, contributed to the formation of Mediterranean bioethics through its prolific publishing traditions. Meanwhile, Spain has focused more on institutional contributions, fostering an expanded understanding of bioethics that integrates medical ethics with ecoethical considerations.

We believe the bioethical approaches from these countries have had, or will have, an influence on the exploration of ethical dilemmas at the crossroads of diverse cultures and religions in regions such as North Africa, other parts of Southern Europe, Southeastern Europe, and even Asian countries along the Mediterranean Sea. Research on these topics reveals a strong but not rigid link to Anglo-American pragmatism, while some centers and bioethicists are actively pursuing an approach based on expanding the understanding of bioethics and diversity. This emerging perspective draws on Mediterranean intellectual heritage and its distinct set of values (Doričić et al., 2023; Mallia, 2012).

Even if all over the Mediterranean, there are individual thinkers and authors supporting the view of bioethics as a discipline devoted to ethical relations, including all forms and sorts of life – primarily in Greece, but also in Turkey or Morocco – it seems that the most vivid bioethical diversity can currently be traced in three Mediterranean countries: Spain, Italy, and Croatia. Why is this the case? Why do only a few countries and a few scholars

dare to »deviate« from the (medical) bioethics mainstream? In some countries, the Church is too powerful to allow the emergence of different perspectives; in others, the attachment to Western (Anglo-American and French mainly) influences has prevailed. UNESCO also contributed to the narrowing down of bioethics, investing a lot of effort into the spread of the doctrine of the “Bioethics Core Curriculum” and Oviedo Declaration. The trend of the mainstream might never be “overturned”; however, the encouraging voices of environmental ethics (recently backed up even by the Catholic Church) and the discovery of Fritz Jahr’s work suggest there might be a future for the original Jahr and/or Potter bioethics, unbounded and responding better to current global challenges.

Certainly, if he had lived longer, Privitera would have done a lot more to realize his vision of Mediterranean bioethics: he announced the founding of the Mediterranean Society for Bioethics and, with his own hands, cleared the land at the foothill of Etna, which he wanted to turn into an agro-tourism property that would “feed” the Institute for Sicilian bioethics (Vecchio, 2014, p. 13).<sup>26</sup>

A person accustomed and opened to such frequent coincidences in the history of bioethics cannot recall Jahr’s and Torchio’s retirement and withdrawal into isolation, Leopold’s, Næss’s, and Potter’s forest huts, as well as the Šegota’s idea of the “ozone research center” on Alan (located on the Velebit mountain). Privitera’s bioethics, as in many other cases, adopted an interesting pluri-perspective approach to questions concerning life, but thematically, it remained entrapped by biomedical anthropocentrism (“The sanctity of life”, “Meaning of death”, “Quality of life”, etc.) despite Privitera’s emphasis (Privitera, 1993) that “bioethics cannot be interested only in medical problems: it must be interested in all other problems related to human and non-human life”. Unlike M. Torchio, who expanded bioethics to environmental problems, S. Privitera confronted imams, Catholic priests, and rabbis with predominantly biomedical topics (Rinčić & Muzur, 2019b; Muzur & Rinčić, 2019b). Despite this, an optimist could conclude that MacIntyre, Gracia, and Privitera planted an intriguing premonition about the uniqueness of the northwestern Mediterranean, which, perhaps – in the hands of more persistent and focused cultivators – will blossom into a resilient (ever)green bioethics ripe for wider universalization.

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<sup>26</sup> Among the other unrealized ideas of Salvatore Privitera, it should be noted that he considered the idea of founding a bioethics institute in Latin America, more precisely in Brazil (cf.: Vigo, 2014).

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# Kako su europske zemlje koje graniče s Mediteranom utjecale na bioetiku; s posebnim naglaskom na Hrvatsku, Grčku, Italiju i Španjolsku

## SAŽETAK

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Jedan od obećavajućih načina konstruiranja bioetike izvan globalnog *mainstreama* – karakteriziranog perspektivom suženom na pitanja vezana uz medicinsku etiku i istraživanje – nedvojbeno je mediteranska bioetika, utemeljena na bogatom intelektualnom nasljeđu bazena između europskog, azijskog i afričkog kontinenta. Ta se bioetika, koja se bavi cijelim biosom i time daleko bliža izvornim idejama Fritza Jahra i Van Rensselaera Pottera, posebno njegovala u Španjolskoj, Italiji, Hrvatskoj i Grčkoj, proizvevši opsežan korpus publikacija. Nakon međunarodnog projekta posvećenog istraživanju tih kulturnih tradicija i njihovih bioetičkih korijena, ovaj rad nudi okvirni pregled najutjecajnijih pojedinaca i njihovih ideja te najaktivnijih institucija na tom području.

**Ključne riječi:** mediteranska bioetika, europska bioetika, povijest bioetike, Fritz Jahr, Van Rensselaer Potter, kultura, tradicija.