

Roundtable Position Paper Abstract (Session 1)  
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Title: Identity Claims from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic

This paper argues that the identity claims of individual Genoese merchants living in the Iberian peninsula, as well as their families, were shaped by the broader anxieties that Iberians felt about identities that did not appear crystalized and singular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It also raises the possibility of the impact of these individuals' persistent claims on the greater pushback apparent at the end of the sixteenth century. Petitioners who resisted many Iberians' desires to see homogenous identities would be required to provide greater witness testimony concerning their family's identity, not only within the Iberian communities where some had lived for many years, but also from across the Mediterranean in Genoa. In response to the growing costs and hostility in some cases, many petitioners responded by continuing to claim Genoese identity, while many renounced ties to Genoa or else dissimulated these ties and their Genoese past. This was not only the case in Iberia and the Western Mediterranean, but was also experienced by members of the same families across the Atlantic in Mexico and beyond. On the one hand impacted by the broader context in Iberia, the individuals seeking to maintain a place betwixt multiple communities likewise appear to have faced greater anxieties as a result of their identity claims that were rooted in the practices of the "corrupting Sea."