

## Plague, Politics and Polemic: The Black Death in Nasrid Granada, ca. 1348-1351

My research, broadly conceived, seeks to situate Nasrid Granada (1232-1492) within the broader context of the various transformations taking place across the late medieval Mediterranean world. This polity, the last surviving Islamic kingdom in medieval Iberia, was in many ways a city-state defined by its urban spaces, but also its significant agrarian hinterland and access to the Mediterranean Sea. This short position paper seeks to reflect upon “how the Mediterranean sea, its micro-regions, and its connected ecological units cultivated a sense of shared space and at the same time became laboratories through which awareness about natural and human phenomena, like disasters and diasporas, manifested in cultural forms and political attitudes.” It specifically addresses the question “how did Mediterranean space condition the particular connections that shaped the history of the broader region?” by examining the impact of the Black Death upon Granada during the mid-fourteenth century.

My paper will highlight two particular plague treatises produced in the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada: the *Muqni'at al-Sā'il 'an al-Maraḍ al-Hā'il* (That Which Satisfies the Questioner Regarding the Appalling Illness) by the Granadan physician and chancellor Lisān al-Dīn b. al-Khaṭīb (d. 1374); and the recently-discovered *Islāḥ al-niyyah fī l-mas'alah al-ṭā'ūniyyah* (Rectifying the Intention Regarding the Matter of the Plague) by Ibn Mushtamil al-Bilyānī (d. 1363), a leading scholar in Almería. I argue that these two authors—among others—provide critical insight into how such a transregional (and Mediterranean-wide) phenomenon as the Black Death was represented in a specific local context within a single “microregion” of the Mediterranean. The paper will also briefly draw attention to the fact that both texts were shaped by the specific intellectual networks and concerns of their authors, while providing significant insight into debates about the origins and causes of the Black Death in Nasrid Granada. The various writings about the plague illustrate that the close communication between physicians, historians and jurists—despite their continuous debates and disagreements about the nature of the disease— was instrumental in facilitating the circulation of knowledge about the Black Death.