



**Chronica Mundi**

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**Donne in Sardegna.  
Creatività ed espressione di sé**

**Women in Sardinia.  
Creativity and Self-Expression**

Edited by  
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Chronica Mundi

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## **Preface**

Chronica Mundi è una rivista scientifica a vocazione internazionale nata con l'idea di creare una piattaforma dove studiosi e anche semplici appassionati di storia possano trovare spunti di riflessione e dibattito. Gli studi pubblicati sulla rivista sono originali, hanno un'ampia copertura temporale e geografica e vengono valutati attraverso il metodo del peer-review. Chronica Mundi ha pubblicazione annuale.

Chronica Mundi is a journal with an international vocation founded with the idea of creating a platform where experts, but also history enthusiasts, can find food for thought and discussion. Studies published in the journal are original, have broad geographic and temporal coverage and are evaluated through the method of peer review. Chronica Mundi is published once a year.

Chronica Mundi es una revista científica de enfoque internacional con miras a crear una plataforma en la que estudiosos y aficionados a la historia puedan encontrar elementos de reflexión y debate. Los estudios publicados en la revista son artículos originales de investigación histórica, tienen una amplia cobertura geográfica-temporal y se evalúan a través del método de revisión por pares. Chronica Mundi aparece una vez al año.





## English Abstracts

### **Along the *Janas*' Thread: Women's Writing in Sardinia beyond the Category of Exceptionalism**

Gigliola Sulis

**Abstract:** Taking as its cue the tiny fairies or witches of Sardinian demology (*janas*), this article proposes an approach to female fiction that goes beyond the idea of the exceptional nature of women's cultural work (a critical category that is often used, to the point of hiding the agentivity of women writers and artists). The Sardinian context is chosen as a case of 'minor literature' which only partially aligns with national and hegemonic developments. This invites a reflection both on the double marginalisation of women writers (because part of a minority and because of their gender), and on their poetic acceptance of this double marginality as a site of privileged positioning. After mapping out the presence of women in the Sardinian literary canon, the article focuses on three case studies: an exploration of the year 2000s, and in particular of the contribution of women's voices towards a poetics of Sardinianness as a nomadic identity (Milena Agus, Michela Murgia, Antonella Anedda); the ongoing reconsideration of women writers of the past, first and foremost Grazia Deledda, propitiated by contemporary sensitivities around issues of gender and new interpretative lenses; and, finally, a focus on female narrators whose work sheds a light on Sardinia after the Second World War, rebalancing the male canon with women's points of view and presenting an image of the island as a transnational space, and as a key but not exclusive component in dynamic identities that are in continuous evolution (Maria Giacobbe, Mariangela Satta, Joyce Lussu, and Nadia Gallico Spano).

**Keywords:** Sardinia, Women Writers, Exceptionality, Double Marginality, Minority Cultures, Plural Identities.

## **The Extraordinary Figure of Sardinia de Lacon in the Sculptural Decoration of St. Peter's Church in Zuri, Ghilarza**

Paolo Ferrante

**Abstract:** Many scholars note that amongst the external stone carvings of the Romanesque church of San Pietro di Zuri a depiction of Sardinia de Lacon is to be found. Sardinia is acknowledged as founder and abbess of the nunnery, and believed by some to be the mother of the Judge Marian II. A *unicum* in the system of architecture and the sole work of a Campionesse master, this church is a signed monument. An inscription on the façade (dated 1291) refers to its consecration and indicates the figure of the judicial commissioner Mariano and the *magister* Anselmo. Highly unusually, though, Sardinia is also referenced to as *operaia*, the individual who oversaw the construction work, financial and administrative management, sourcing of funds, and recruitment and payment of the workers. The documentary evidence that this role was entrusted to a woman is a unique fact in the history of Romanesque art. The church's sculptural decoration is also remarkable: an interlocking work by Anselmo, including a group composed of St. Peter, the Virgin and Child, and five Apostles, one of whom is embracing Sardinia. The inclusion of a sculptural representation of the client is in itself a rare occurrence in Romanesque architecture; here, in Zuri, we find the representation of a mortal woman interacting with holy figures. These details have led to further investigative research on the identity of Sardinia based on new information and multidisciplinary analysis approaches. This paper analyzes a new identification hypothesis and its consequences for the dating of the early construction of the church and the sculptural frieze, examining the inclusion of its executors in a completely different art-historical context than previously assumed, as well as the possible identity of the *magister* Anselmo.

**Keywords:** Romanesque Sculpture, Sardinian Judicates/"Giudicati",

Medieval Genealogies, Medieval Iconography, Epigraphy.

## **‘We will take care of her’. Images of Sardinian Women during the Economic “Rebirth” of the Island (1948-1962)**

Gianmarco Mancosu

**Abstract:** Newsreels and documentary films were amongst the most popular means for distributing information in post-war Italy. They typically endorsed the agenda of both the government and capitalist lobbies and pervaded the everyday life of Italians, defining political, social, and cultural categories and discourses. The proposed article explores how post-war newsreels and short-film documentaries backed by the Italian government – particularly the famous newsreel series, *Settimana Incom* – engaged with the process of Sardinia’s modernization (the so-called *rinascita sarda*). Specific attention is paid to the representation of Sardinian women, who embodied the island as a whole, as well as the tension between tradition and modernity. Adopting decolonial and intersectional perspectives, this article deconstructs representations of, and narratives about, the island and its inhabitants. The analysis contends that newsreels and documentaries fashioned racial and gender constructions that were entirely consistent with an externally imposed economic and capitalist agenda; but shows that these policies were somewhat disconnected from the socio-cultural configuration of Sardinian society.

**Keywords:** Sardinia, Newsreels and Documentary Film, “Rinascita”, Intersectionality.

# **Music and Language as Female Spaces of Creativity and Self-Expression in Sardinia: Maria Carta, Dolores Biossa and Franzisca Manca**

Marco Lutz, Diego Pani and Kristina Jacobsen

**Abstract:** In this article, we engage with women's creativity in musical expression/oral tradition after the Second World War in Sardinia. We analyse three case studies that extend to the present, examining music and poetry, domains which are still today typically dominated by men. In each, we look at the ways in which women creatively navigate their gendered identities through musico-linguistic expressive practices and language reclamation. We take music and poetry as a central part of social praxis, and where praxis is deeply intertwined with gender norms, roles and social expectations. The women artists we focus on are cultural innovators who have chosen music and poetry as a forum for creative expression within a specific canon that, despite the many social changes introduced across Sardinia and Italy since World War Two, continues to be largely dominated by men. The performers we examine range from extremely well-known in Sardinia and abroad, to known in one micro-region of Sardinia. While they have been artistically influential, the scales at which we examine their influence differ greatly. Thus, simply through navigating and existing within these genres, the Sardinian artists examined here – Maria Carta, Dolores Biossa and Franzisca Manca – are expanding the definitions of what it means to be a Sardinian woman, artist, singer, politician and performer.

**Keywords:** Ethnomusicology, Sardinia, Expressive Culture, Female Performers, Language Reclamation, Music, Poetry.

## **Maria Elena Sini: A Voice at the Outbreak of the First World War. With an Introduction on Female Sung and ‘A Tavolino’ Poetry in the Sources**

Gloria Turtas

**Abstract:** The case of Maria Elena Sini (Benetutti, 1893-1989) represents an exception within the Sardinian genre of *gosos*, whose texts are usually anonymous or signed by men. A few months after 24 May 1915, the date that Italy declared war on Austria, and consistent with the positions held by the Catholic world in the delicate debate between interventionists and neutralists, Sini, at just 21 years of age, became the mouthpiece of a desperate appeal in the Sardinian language through the *Gosos pro sa Paghe* (‘Praise for peace’), using the tools available to her from the written and oral tradition. Described as a woman ‘enclosed in her modesty’ and living a secluded life, she never signed her compositions, which initially circulated anonymously and with great success throughout the island, through the media of printed loose sheets and sung performances. In a tone somewhere between prayer and reproach, addressed to the Lord and the Virgin, Sini gives voice not only to the suffering of the fighters, but also to that of every woman, mother and wife; her thoughts are addressed not only to Sardinia, but to every nation. In 1920, the periodical *Cordelia* – founded in 1881 by Angelo De Gubernatis – sanctioned, at national level, the attribution of her texts, with an article dedicated to Sini’s work authored by the writer Gemina Fernando. Benetutti’s poetess is also an important figure in the little-explored context of women’s poetry in Sardinia, an introductory framework to which is briefly set out here.

**Keywords:** Female Poetry, Sardinia, *Gosos*, Devotional Songs, Anti-war Songs, First World War.

# **Women, *Femmine*, *Eminas*: Rebellious Figures in the Novels of Salvatore Niffoi**

Laura Nieddu

**Abstract:** This essay seeks to explore the notion of the rebellious female figure in relation to some of the protagonists of Salvatore Niffoi's novels: Redenta Tiria, in *La leggenda di Redenta Tiria* (2005); Mintonia, in *La vedova scalza* (2006); the heroines of *L'ultimo inverno* (2007); Itria, in *Il lago dei sogni* (2011); and Sidora, in *Le donne di Orolé* (2020). Following an initial overview of representations of women in recent Sardinian fiction, it focuses on Niffoi's female characters, from the most commonplace and stereotypical (the sorceress, the bigot, the prostitute), to the protagonists mentioned above. The aim is to highlight how their subversive force, with respect to the communities in which they are situated, is based not on violence or arrogance, but rather on the salvific value of generosity, of culture, and books, enabling them to achieve a gentle insurrection.

**Keywords:** Contemporary Sardinian Fiction, Salvatore Niffoi, Sardinian Women, Female Rebel Figures.

## **The First Novel in Sardinian: Francesca Cambosu's *Sa bida est amore***

Stefano Fogarizzu

**Abstract:** *Sa bida est amore* [*Life is love*], by Francesca Cambosu, is the first novel written in the Sardinian language. Written in 1924, this long-forgotten text was first published in 1982, and rediscovered only recently. This paper analyses the context of the novel's creation, its structure, and its central themes, including family, work, and

religion. The aim is to highlight the representation of cultural memory as well as the novel's particular anthropological and cultural features, which attest to its importance and justify its recognition in the field of Sardinian literature and culture.

**Keywords:** Sardinia, Sardinian Language, Sardinian Literature, Novel, Francesca Cambosu.

### **Milena Agus's *Margin: Caring for Ourselves and Caring for the World***

Ramona Onnis

**Abstract:** *Un tempo gentile* (2020) is Milena Agus' latest novel, the story of a community of Sardinian women who suddenly find themselves in contact with a group of migrants, with whom they will slowly learn to interact in a relationship of mutual care and assistance. The novel proposes a thematization of inter-South solidarity that will be interesting to interrogate, interweaving studies of care, a gender perspective, and the question of the global South.

**Keywords:** Milena Agus, South, Migrants, Care, Gender.

### **Insularity through Weaving Words in Antonella Anedda Angioy's Poetry**

Giuliana Adamo

**Abstract:** This essay explores certain poetic ideas in Antonella Anedda Angioy's work that are especially linked to the dimension of her home island, through an observation of the particular fabric of her poetic language. Anedda's words go beyond warp and weft, altering

the chronotope to turn it into something more universal. The detail Anedda weaves expresses our human finitude through the truth of poetry, transporting it from island to island, from era to era, from voice to voice.

**Keywords:** Anedda, Details, Threads, Impermanence, Fragility, Void, Irony.





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