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TO BHMA International edition

Hacking Power: When the User Talks Back to the Algorithm

By Dimitris Elafropoulos

Stefano, an Italian fine art photographer from Livorno in west Italy, decided during the pandemic to work as a food delivery rider to boost his income.

At first, he feels a great sense of freedom, as he was working without a boss, without fixed hours, with immediate pay.

Very quickly, however, that promise turns into stress, dependency, and uncertainty in the face of an algorithm that decides, without explanation, his shift, imposes penalties, and even affects his mental health.

Please turn to Page 4

TO BHMA International edition

Easter: The Debate For Animals Returns - Unfortunately Not All Of Them

By Panos Kougias

Easter Sunday always revives the conversation about animals, albeit temporarily, and with a focus on lambs and young goats. It is probably the only time of the year when the issue of our relationship with other species is in the spotlight. Still, another category of animals doesn't receive any attention at all.

Stray and unattended equines continue to exist in a "virtually non-existent" legal framework, it is claimed, in a "huge legal vacuum" which makes it unclear who, if anyone, is responsible for their welfare. And to live their daily lives in conditions that all too often border on abuse.

Please turn to Page 7

ATEF SAFADI/EPA

Orthodox Christian worshippers holding candles at the Tomb of Christ as the miracle, according to believers, of the Holy Fire is observed in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. File photo from April 30, 2016, Jerusalem, Israel.

TO BHMA International edition

Travelers' Accounts of Orthodox Easter in the Ottoman Era

By H. Tzanis

Easter (Pascha) Sunday, the most important religious and communal event for Greek Orthodox populations around the world, is observed and celebrated today, April 12. As Easter Sunday can fall between early April, at the earliest, and the first week of May, at the latest, in the Orthodox ecclesiastical calendar, it also marks the advent of Spring.

Yet for roughly four centuries, the lands that correspond to Greece today were part of the Ottoman empire, a Sunni Muslim–dominated state. The latter divided subjects by faith—not ethnicity, background or language—into Muslims, Christians, Jews and Armenians.

While the core religious rituals continued unchanged from the Byzantine tradition, historical accounts shed light on how the great feast day was experienced, expressed and remembered during the often dour era of Ottoman rule.

Please turn to Page 8

Fight Over Feta Strains America's Ties With Europe

By Jon Emont

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

For four generations, the Sartori family of Plymouth, Wis., has been making Asiago cheese in a tradition that dates to patriarch Paolo Sartori, who hailed from a town near Asiago, Italy.

But, under pressure from Europe, many countries around the world are blocking American producers such as the Sartoris from using the Asiago name, saying it can be used only for cheese made the right way in Italy. The same goes for Parmesan and Romano cheese made by the Sartoris. To avoid generic descriptions such as "Italian-style hard cheese," the company restricts where it sells its products outside the U.S.

"Consumers should decide what cheese wins in the marketplace, not European lawyers," says Paolo's great-grandson, Bert Sartori.

Now the Trump administration is trying to make the world safe for Wisconsin's Asiago cheese—as well as American Parmesan, feta, Gorgonzola, brie and Munster.

In trade deals around the globe, the administration is requiring countries to accept America's view about generic food names.

Please turn to Page 2

TANYA HABJOUQA FOR WSJ

As well as Asiago, Sartori makes Parmesan and Romano cheese using traditional methods.

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Fight Over Feta Strains America's Ties With Europe

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

The Trump administration has persuaded some nations in trade deals to let U.S. producers use food names that EU claims for itself

Continued from Page One

Governments including Taiwan, Malaysia and Argentina are promising to let U.S. companies market their cheeses under the names everyone recognizes.

"The past year marked a real breakthrough," said Shawna Morris, who heads trade policy at the National Milk Producers Federation.

The U.S. campaign has prompted a rebuke from the Consorzio del Formaggio Parmigiano Reggiano, which represents hundreds of Italian producers. It is opposed to cheese being labeled as Parmesan unless it is produced in the designated region in northern Italy, according to strict production standards.

In 2023, an American business marketing grated cheese was caught by the Consorzio's enforcers using the word Parmesan at a German food fair. A court officer removed the word "Parmesan" from the advertising panel. The Consorzio said that in the European Union, "it is absolutely forbidden to sell or advertise these counterfeit products."

The Consorzio estimated in 2025 that "fake Parmesan" sales outside the EU exceeded 2 billion euros annually, or about $2.3 billion.

The group's president, Nicola Bertinelli, said the issue was transparency for cheese lovers. "Consumers may believe they are purchasing a product linked to a specific Italian origin and production method, when in fact they are not," he said.

American dairy operations are large and efficient, with generations of experience making European-style cheeses, so they can sometimes offer better prices than European rivals. American cheese exports rose 20% last year to a record 613,000 metric tons.

There are no hard-and-fast rules about when a place name or other traditional description attached to a product becomes generic. Almost everyone agrees that at some point long ago, cheddar became a style of cheese, not a product that has to come from Cheddar, England. On the other end of the spectrum, even the U.S. acknowledges that Champagne can generally refer only to sparkling wine from a specific region of France.

Wisconsin company Sartori has been making Asiago cheese since 1939.

TANYA HABJOUQA FOR WSJ

In between, it is a free-for-all. To Americans, feta is a crumbly cheese. To the European Union, Feta, though not a place name, can come only from a region of Greece that has millennia of tradition making that kind of cheese. The EU says a primitive form of feta is mentioned in the Odyssey, when the hero of the ancient epic takes cheese from the cave of the cyclops Polyphemus.

For the most part, the U.S. and EU have hit a stalemate over how each side treats cheese on its own home turf. That leaves the rest of the world for the two to battle it out.

Take Indonesia, an archipelagic country of 285 million people that lacks grazing land for cattle. It buys $220 million a year of dairy from the U.S.

In September, the EU announced a trade deal with Indonesia that required the Southeast Asian nation to protect over 200 food products. An annex specified that, as far as Indonesia is concerned, feta comes only from Greece and Gorgonzola from Italy.

In February, the Trump administration struck back with its own trade deal. This time Indonesia said it would allow American producers to use their preferred names—the opposite of what it had just promised the Europeans. Neither the U.S. deal nor the European one has been formally ratified by Indonesia's government.

European Commission spokesman Olof Gill said Indonesia needed to respect the cheese names or there would be a stink. Trade deals with other countries "must not undermine the EU's bilateral agreements," he said. The U.S. trade representative's office and the Indonesian government didn't respond to requests for comment.

In March, the EU concluded a trade agreement with Australia which includes protections for 396 European products. Under the deal, all Australian cheesemakers will have to stop calling their product "fontina" after five years. Existing Australian producers will be allowed to call their product feta, but new dairy companies won't be able to.

Australia said the concessions were necessary to secure an agreement with the EU.

Ian Schuman, a senior executive at New Jersey Parmesan and Asiago exporter Schuman Cheese, hailed Washington's successes. "The deals in Southeast Asia and Latin America are particularly exciting given their growing populations and increased appetite for cheese," he said.

The Drones Coming to Schools to Stop Mass Shootings

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Mithril Defense is selling school districts on technology that responds faster than police, but critics say it diverts resources from more effective measures

By Christopher Kuo

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

The drones can dart across fields at 100 miles an hour, punch through windows and bowl over assailants.

The sleek, black machines aren't destined for battlefields in Ukraine or skies above the Middle East. Instead, they will hurtle through the hallways of high schools in Florida and Georgia.

Mithril Defense is deploying fleets of drones—called "Black Arrows"—for schools as part of state-funded programs to increase security and reduce gun violence.

The machines can screech, flash strobe lights and shoot pepper gel to deter assailants—while operated by pilots at the company's headquarters in Austin, Texas.

Executives from Mithril and law-enforcement officials said the drones could reduce student casualties by reaching attackers faster than police or school-resource officers.

"It's revolutionary," said Volusia County Sheriff's Office Capt. Todd Smith, who oversees safety and security for the county's schools in Florida. The drones are expected to be installed in Deltona High School on Monday and be ready for use this fall. "This is the future."

Amid heightened concerns over gun violence in schools, companies are marketing an array of new technologies, from AI-powered gun detection tools to wearable panic buttons. Over the past year, police departments across the country have expanded their use of drones, which increasingly function as first responders to a variety of crime scenes.

Unlike police drones dispatched after a 911 call, Mithril's machines lie dormant in ceiling-mounted boxes, charging until a threat arrives.

Some privacy and policing experts said the technology could be vulnerable to cyberattacks, lead to abuses of force, or divert resources from more effective safety measures.

Testing of Mithril Defense's drones at a facility in Texas.

KAYLEE GREENLY FOR WSJ

"We have a real mental health crisis in schools, and we could be using the money to deal with that," said Barry Friedman, a law professor and expert on policing at New York University.

Eradicating shootings

The schools are using Mithril's Campus Guardian Angel system, which combines the use of cheap, lightweight drones with remote monitoring and operations.

Mithril, founded in 2023, first tested the concept at an abandoned school in Austin the following year. The idea for Campus Guardian Angel came from Justin Marston, a British entrepreneur and Mithril co-founder, who saw videos of small Ukrainian drones pestering Russian soldiers with guns.

"Our vision is ultimately to be in every school in the nation and to eradicate mass shootings," Marston said.

Marston and co-founder Bill King , a former Navy SEAL command master chief, assembled an eclectic team—veterans from law enforcement and the military, and several of the country's top-ranked drone-racing pilots, including some as young as 18.

The company is supplying its technology in Florida and Georgia after the states each approved more than $500,000 for drone operations in schools. A group of parents in Texas have also raised more than $200,000 with the goal of bringing Campus Guardian Angel to a high school near Houston.

Use of force

Some experts said the drone technology could result in greater and unwarranted uses of force.

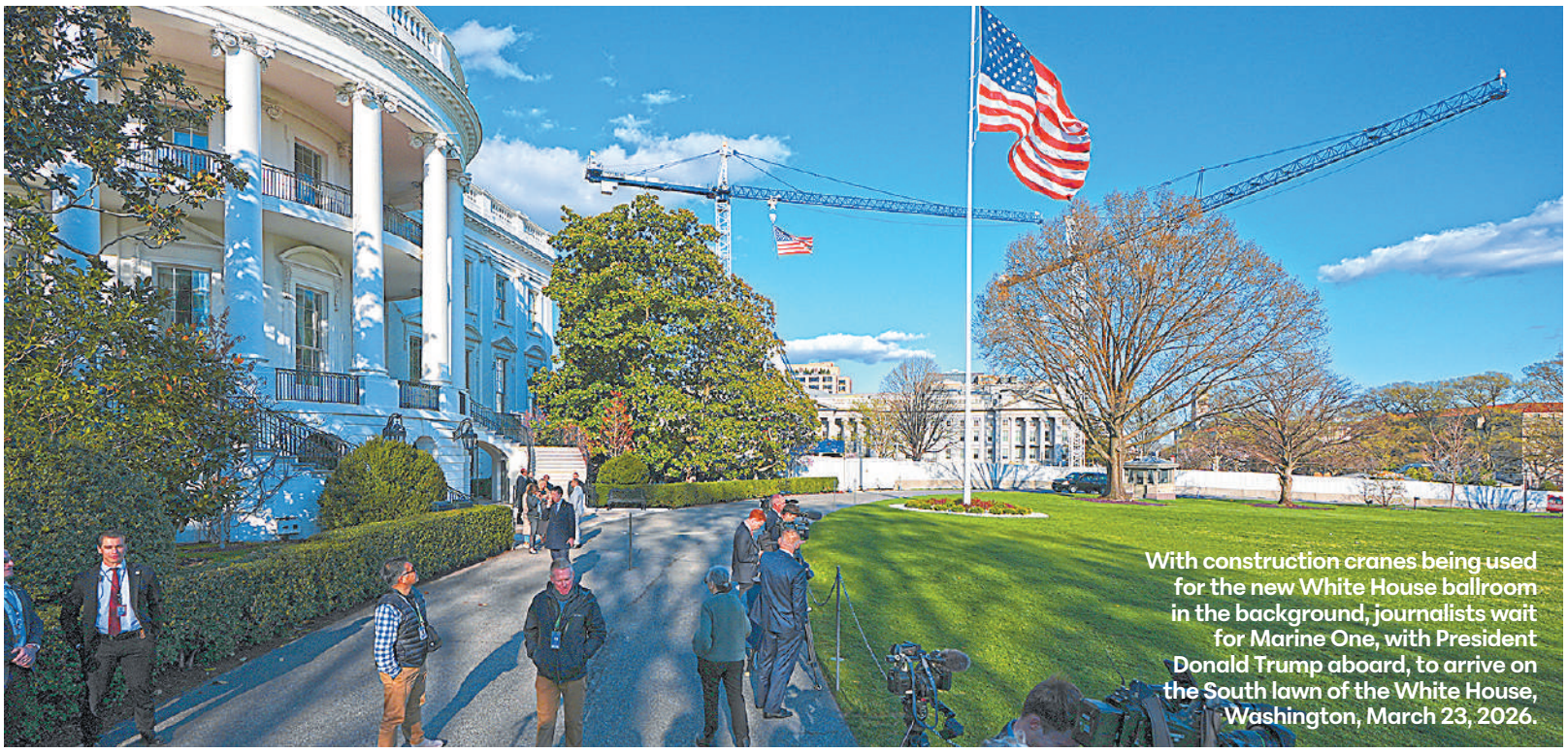
"When you make it really easy to use force, zero risk proposition, something you can do remotely sitting in your IT room, then it's going to be overused," said Jay Stanley, a senior policy analyst with the American Civil Liberties Union.

Mithril said its drones will be deployed only during active shooter situations, though Marston acknowledged the potential for students to be inadvertently injured while a drone is in use. "We believe we can help in the vast majority of these mass shootings," he said.

Mithril isn't the first company to try to supply drones for school security. In 2022, Axon Enterprise began work on Taser-equipped drone systems to address mass shootings, but the company later scrapped its plans after its ethics advisory board objected to the project.

Law-enforcement officials and company executives said they consulted with numerous parents before approving the technology.

Mithril wants to expand beyond schools to become the go-to security force for entities from private companies to government agencies. The company said it is conducting demonstrations for oil and gas, finance and retail companies.



JULIA DEMAREE NIKHINSON/AP

With construction cranes being used for the new White House ballroom in the background, journalists wait for Marine One, with President Donald Trump aboard, to arrive on the South lawn of the White House, Washington, March 23, 2026.

Inside the Trump Era: Power, Pressure, and the Future of American Journalism

In this revealing interview with *To BHMA International Edition*, Chief White House Correspondent for the New York Times Peter Baker offers a candid look at how the Trump presidency has reshaped the relationship between power and the press

By Odin Linardatou

Drawing on decades of experience covering multiple administrations, Baker explores the unprecedented challenges facing journalists, the erosion of public trust, and the growing polarization defining American politics today. As the media landscape contracts and political tensions rise, Baker reflects on what these changes mean for democracy, accountability, and the future of independent journalism in the United States. Peter Baker, Chief White House Correspondent for *The New York Times*, will participate in the Delphi Economic Forum, 22-25 April, 2026.

How has working inside the White House changed for journalists under the Trump administration compared to the past?

The Trump White House is vastly different from any other White House I've covered, Republican or Democrat. On the one hand, this president talks with reporters more than any other hand, in modern times. On the other, he has worked to systematically pressure reporters more than any other in modern times. He has taken control of the White House press pool and evicted news organizations that anger him while replacing them with political organs that send to the White House not independent journalists but supporters of his. He has sued some news organizations, used the FCC to pressure others and helped support the corporate takeover of still others.

You've reported on Obama, Clinton, and Bush — what makes covering Trump completely different?

President Trump is different in almost every way. Other presidents were more predictable, respected certain norms and dealt with reporters professionally. With Trump, on any given day, we never know for sure what he will do. He talks with us more than any other president but is also more personally belligerent than any other president to journalists who ask questions or write stories he does not like.

What does the mass layoff and contraction of *The Washington Post* — once a pillar of investigative journalism — mean for democracy and accountability in the U.S.?

Nothing good, that's for sure. We all depend on a healthy independent media to make democracy work, hold people in power accountable and provide readers with reliable, factual information. I worked at *The Post* for 20 years before moving to the The Times in 2008 and throughout my life until now it has been a mainstay of the American news industry, a fearless truthteller regardless of the pressure from powerful people. Now it is a shell of its former self. It still has some remarkable reporters doing important work, but without a robust newspaper based in the nation's capital, Americans are left with far less insight into the workings of their government.

Peter Baker

Are U.S. newsrooms under greater pressure than at any time since Watergate — politically, economically, or culturally?

Yes, for sure. The number of daily newspapers in the United States has fallen from 7,325 to 4,562 in just 20 years and the number of newspaper jobs has fallen by 70 percent. Polls show that public trust in the media is at a low point. Increasingly, Americans turn to ideological sources of information that suit their own political views rather than look for indepedent journalism that may challenge their ideas. Our challenge is to remind Americans why independent journalism matters in a democratic society.

Is the Trump era now a permanent feature of American politics — or a phase that can be reversed by public pressure and institutional safeguards? You recently wrote that Trump, in his second term, is building an unprecedented cult of personality in American history, creating a mythologized, almost omnipresent persona. Do you think we are likely to see more 'Trump-like' presidents in the U.S. in the future, or is this truly unique?

Trump is sui generis but he does represent a fundamental shift in American politics that is not going to simply go away when he does. He tapped into a broad sense of disaffection by many Americans (though not a majority) who feel that the country has slipped away from them demographically, economically, politically, culturally or ideologically. Whoever comes next will face a country that is as polarized as it has been at any time since the early 1970s. But I don't think that future presidents or presidential candidates can simply mimic Trump. He is a unique figure and immitation is not a guarantee of success.

How real is the danger that polarization and political attacks on institutions could weaken American democracy long term?

Americans have grown increasingly polarized and distrustful of their institutions over many years, starting long before Trump came along. He did not create this situation, but he did tap into it effectively and channel it into two successful campaigns for president. If Americans lose faith in their democracy, if they assume that any election their side loses is only because it was rigged, if they think that every politician abuses power and enriches themselves, it makes it harder as a society to find common cause, solve problems and assert leadership in the world.

President Trump's repeated attacks on polls and mainstream media as "fraudulent" — do they pose a direct threat to public trust in facts and democratic processes?

Increasingly we see a choose-your-own-facts environment in which partisans trust only information that confirms their own preconceived notions. It means that the poltical world is not starting from the same fact set, making it that much harder to come together for solutions.

How has the Trump-era approach to immigration and law enforcement affected the public's faith in democratic institutions? And in light of the Minneapolis killings and rising anti-immigrant rhetoric, how is America changing from the country we once knew?

America has always struggled with questions of immigration going back to the 19th century, but we are a point in the historical cycle when hostility to people originally from outside the country has reached a new peak. The question is whether the handling of Minneapolis and other scenes from the past year have turned off people who previously supported a crackdown on immigration and whether the economic cost of losing so many immigrant workers creates a countervailing pressure on the government. Many Americans supported Trump's effort to close the border, especially to those coming illegally, and support deporting violent criminals, as he has promised. But they have recoiled some of the actions against immigrants who are not criminals, which is the vast majority of those arrested so far.

TO BHMA International edition

Hacking Power: When the User Talks Back to the Algorithm

Are algorithms merely tools of control? Tiziano Bonini and Emiliano Trere explain to *TO BHMA* that workers and activists "respond" to platform power, turning code into a tool of resistance and digital isolation into a new form of collective action

Continued from Page One

It is precisely from this everyday experience of delivery workers on platform apps that the book *Algorithms of Resistance (Ropi editions)* by Tiziano Bonini and Emiliano Treré takes its starting point. The book analyzes platforms not merely as mechanisms of control, but as spaces where users have the power to develop forms of resistance.

"The narrative of algorithmic omnipotence leads to inaction, nihilism, and despair."

The two Italian academics examine the ways in which users' appropriate algorithms to achieve what they want in work, culture, and politics. Against the dominant narrative of algorithmic omnipotence, the authors highlight the potential for user resistance, through actively influencing the outcomes of algorithms.

What first pushed you to write a book that treats algorithms not only as systems of control, but also as possible tools of resistance?

When we first started planning this book, between 2018 and 2019, we were reading only books that presented a monolithic view of the power of digital platforms, as if we users were merely helpless victims unable to fight back. This narrative is still quite widespread in the media, but no longer within the academic community.

You argue that algorithms are not just tools of oppression, but can also be "algorithms of resistance". How do you define "algorithmic agency," and why is it crucial to look at what people do to algorithms, rather than just what algorithms do to people?

The field of platform studies has given us powerful tools to understand algorithmic oppression, with scholars like Noble, Eubanks, and Zuboff illuminating how algorithms discriminate and surveil. But in focusing so intensely on what algorithms do to people, the field has left in the shadow the inverse question: what do people do to algorithms? That is the question at the heart of our book.

We define algorithmic agency as the reflexive ability of humans to exercise power over the outcome of an algorithm. Drawing on Giddens's structuration theory, we argue that humans and algorithmic infrastructures mutually shape each other in a recursive loop. When Deliveroo couriers learn to cancel shifts without losing rating points, or when Uber drivers coordinate via Telegram to trigger surge pricing, they are doing things to algorithms.

And yet we are careful not to romanticize this. As Ien Ang reminded us, we must not cheerfully equate the active with the powerful. What we want is a more honest narrative, one that accounts for both the structural weight of platform power and the persistent, inventive, often microscopic agency that people exercise within it.

It is important to look at what people are doing to algorithms for two reasons:

First, so as not to fall into the ideological trap that leads us to believe these platforms are unassailable, invincible and all-powerful. This narrative leads to inaction, nihilism and despair. Yet we can do many things, both at the micro and macro levels, by regulating them appropriately.

Second, it gives us a more realistic and less pessimistic view of ourselves as human beings: we are not completely passive subjects, nor are we so easily manipulated.

In the introduction, you follow Stefano, a courier in Livorno, whose initial enthusiasm for the platform turns into dependency and anxiety. Why did you choose to open the book with such a story?

We chose Stefano precisely because of his ordinariness. He is a forty-three-year-old art photographer from Livorno who downloaded Deliveroo during the first COVID-19 lockdown after losing his freelance work. He fixed an old bicycle and started riding. The first week felt like freedom, with nearly 300 euros earned, no boss, and no obligations. A month later, he was anxiously checking the app for shifts, feeling dependent on a system he barely understood.

What his story captures is the full arc of the platform experience: the initial seduction of autonomy, then the slow discovery of dependency and opacity. He did not understand the algorithm until a colleague in the local couriers' WhatsApp group explained that missing one shift had cost him two rating points. That small drop changed everything: worse shifts, less income, a punishment never announced by any rule. But the story is not only one of victimization.

Without that WhatsApp group, Stefano told us, he would have already quit. The group was his introduction to collective algorithmic intelligence and solidarity: shared, informal, bottom-up knowledge about how to navigate a system designed to keep workers isolated and compliant.

You use the concept of the "Moral Economy" to explain the clash between platforms and users. How does this concept help us understand why a platform calls a

practice "gaming" (cheating) while a worker calls it "optimization" or even survival?

The British and Marxist cultural historian Edward Palmer Thompson argued in 1971 that the English food rioters of the past were not irrational mobs. They were acting according to a coherent moral vision: bread had to have a "just price," and merchants who violated it deserved public punishment. He was distinguishing between two competing moral economies, not declaring one more moral than the other.

We apply this logic to platforms: Deliveroo, Uber, and Instagram embody a specific moral economy: neoliberal values of competition, individual optimization, and data extractivism. When a courier games the algorithm to get better shifts, the platform calls it cheating. When an Instagram creator joins a pod to exchange likes, the platform calls it inauthentic behavior. But from the users' perspective, these are acts of survival or fair compensation, "fair" or "just" responses to a system that arbitrarily reduced their earnings or visibility. As we write in chapter 2: gaming is in the eye of the beholder.

The problem is that the power to define what counts as gaming is not equally distributed. Platforms have enormous institutional authority to impose their moral vocabulary, as they can de-platform, shadow-ban, or penalize. What our book tries to do is give voice to the other moral economy: the one workers and creators articulate in their WhatsApp groups, and to show that this alternative moral vision is not random, but deeply coherent.

You found couriers building "algorithmic alliances" through private WhatsApp and Telegram groups. How are these digital spaces becoming the new "factory floors" for organizing and solidarity?

The gig economy was explicitly designed to prevent collective organizing: workers are isolated, legally classified as independent contractors, each facing the algorithm alone. What surprised us in our fieldwork was that workers had spontaneously recreated something like a collective space in the digital realm. The WhatsApp and Telegram groups we observed among couriers from China to Italy functioned as informal unions of a new kind — spaces for sharing what we call the "algorithmic imaginary": collective theories about how the platform actually works, built through shared experience and daily trial and error.

Emiliano Trere, author and distinguished researcher at the University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain, and associate professor in the field of Data Management and Media Ecosystems at Cardiff University, United Kingdom.

Tiziano Bonini, one of the authors of the book "Algorithms of Resistance", is a professor at the University of Siena specializing in the sociology of culture and communication. The book analyzes platforms not merely as mechanisms of control, but as spaces where users have the power to develop forms of resistance.

These groups also produced what we call algorithmic alliances — human-to-human solidarities organized around resisting the algorithm. The clearest example are collective log-outs of Chinese and Mexican couriers in order to protest against the platforms, or to artificially inflate the price of an order, or to ensure that even those couriers who had not received any orders during the day could earn some money. This is collective action that turns the platform's own algorithmic logic against itself, that is resistance through the algorithm, not just against it.

However, we are careful not to overstate this. These groups are fragile, precarious, and do not replace formal union organizing. But they show, empirically, that the isolation platforms engineer is never total neither easily accepted by the workers.

In your chapter on culture, you describe visibility as a battleground. Has visibility—the constant effort to be "seen" by the algorithm on Instagram or TikTok—now become a form of labor in its own right?

In chapter 4 we argue that visibility has become the central currency of platformized cultural work. For musicians, photographers, and creators, visibility is no longer a byproduct of good work — it is the work, or at least inseparable from it. We frame this as "visibility labor": the continuous, exhausting effort to be seen by the algorithm, to understand its preferences, and to organize collective practices that might game or boost it.

The Instagram pods we studied illustrate this well. These private groups, on WhatsApp or Telegram, coordinate the systematic exchange of likes and comments within minutes of each post's publication, in order to trick the engagement algorithm into amplifying their content. Members develop elaborate rules and reciprocity norms. It is organized, rule-governed labour, even if nobody calls it that. Members feel pride at beating the system, but also guilt and exhausted.

Most importantly, this generates an arms-race dynamic: platforms detect pod behaviour and update their algorithms; users adapt; platforms adapt again. The cost of staying visible keeps rising. It is a visibility treadmill that benefits the platforms far more than the workers running on it.

'The British and Marxist cultural historian Edward Palmer Thompson argued in 1971 that the English food rioters of the past were not irrational mobs. Deliveroo, Uber, and Instagram embody a specific moral economy: neoliberal values of competition, individual optimization, and data extractivism'

Looking at movements like the Indignados or #BlackLivesMatter, how has the "repertoire of contention" for protesters changed in the age of algorithms?

Charles Tilly's concept of "repertoire of contention" describes the historically specific set of collective action forms available to movements at a given moment. Our argument in chapter 5 is that we are living through a major transformation of these repertoires, driven by algorithmic logic. Movements like the Indignados and #BlackLivesMatter were among the first to develop what we call algorithmic activism: trending hashtags, coordinated posting, content optimized for platform recommendation, all deployed alongside traditional street protest. The algorithm became part of the repertoire.

But this is deeply ambivalent. Platforms reward engagement and virality regardless of political content, which means algorithmic tactics can amplify progressive movements just as easily as far-right populism or authoritarian propaganda. We call this the "agnosticism" of algorithmic activism: the same tools are available to movements with radically opposing agendas. The Indignados and the alt-right both learned to game trending topics.

This agnosticism is one of our most politically urgent findings. Algorithmic literacy, namely understanding how platforms shape what gets seen, is no longer a technical skill but rather a political necessity for any movement that wants to survive and grow in the current media environment.

'Movements like the Indignados and #BlackLivesMatter were among the first to develop what we call algorithmic activism: trending hashtags, coordinated posting, content optimized for platform recommendation, all deployed alongside traditional street protest'

You are very explicit about your positionality as white, male, Italian, first-generation academics working in institutions of the Global North. How did that self-awareness shape both your method and your conclusions?

We are explicit about this in the introduction: both of us are white, cisgender, Italian men, first-generation academics now working in institutions of the Global North. By the time we conducted this research, we had accumulated enough cultural, social, and economic capital to make informed choices about our platform use. Most of our interviewees had no such luxury. The couriers we followed did not choose Deliveroo; many had no viable alternative. That asymmetry is not incidental but constitutive of the research relationship.

We also share a background as media and political activists in the late 1990s and early 2000s, which made us instinctively attentive to forms of resistance that operate below the threshold of formal organization. We own the sympathy that background produces. Howard Becker's observation that "we cannot avoid taking sides" is one we take seriously.

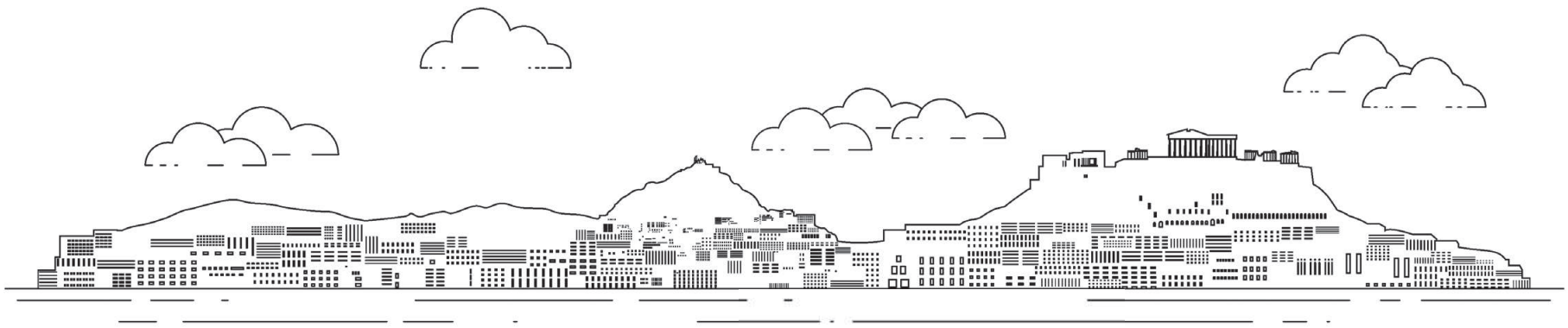
Methodologically, this pushed us toward transparency and epistemic humility: we made our theoretical commitments explicit from the start, and we submitted our findings to some of our interviewees, including couriers Nadim and Bruna from Florence, for review and correction. What we cannot fully resolve is whether our sympathy for resistance sometimes led us to overestimate its significance. We hope our framework, which explicitly acknowledges that agency does not equal power, guards against the worst of that risk.

What questions did the book leave unanswered that you would like other researchers, journalists, or activists to take up?

The most significant gap is the Global South. Despite including cases from India, Mexico, China, and the Middle East, the empirical heart of the book remains European. The conditions of gig work and activism in contexts shaped by colonial legacies or authoritarian governance cannot simply be mapped onto frameworks developed primarily in Italy and the UK. We need researchers embedded in those contexts, not just applying our framework but testing and transforming it.

A second gap concerns what happens after micro-resistance. We document everyday tactics with ethnographic richness but say less about the conditions under which tactics can become something more durable and structurally transformative. We would like labour organizers, activists, and legal scholars - especially in countries where gig worker organizing has already produced legal victories, like Italy and Spain, to explore this question further.

Meet the Aθenians



If you've spent time in Athens as a visitor or a resident, you'll know how chaotic, charming, exasperating and irresistible the city can be—often all at once

Where do Athenians spend their time? Where do they unwind, meet friends, or enjoy their daily coffee? Where does work end and the city begin? In Meet the Athenians, we talk to the people of Athens about the places and moments that make them love the city they call home.

Katerina Zafeiropoulou

Actress

1 I was born in Athens, grew up here, and lived in the city for thirty years. There was a three-year interruption, when work, youth, and dreams took me to Berlin. A year ago, I returned to my old neck of the woods.

My work as an artist is, at its core, a continuous encounter with people. Acting demands constant observation: of strangers passing, of people close to me, of feelings. It requires communication with colleagues on and off stage, the ability to navigate a wide range of emotions, and the courage to create and let go of the relationships and dynamics that emerge throughout the process. Dancing, on the other hand, is a topography of the body: our bodies speak for ourselves in a dialogue that connects us beyond words.

Because people are the city, and the city is its people, my work becomes a conversation with both factors and constitutional elements, whether it be on stage, on set, or in the dance studio. I strive to remain open to this dialogue at all times, as it sustains my curiosity. For me, curiosity is an essential condition for growth.

2 Athens is a city of immense historical importance. A restless blend of eras stretching from antiquity to modern times, it is set within a landscape of unexpected natural richness.

In a 24-hour journey through Athens, I would begin with the sea: a trip by boat around the Attica peninsula. Starting from the island of Salamina in the Saronic Gulf, I would sail all the way to Rafina in the Aegean Sea. Along the way, I would observe the city's geography as revealed from the sea, its diversity, and its relationship with nature. I would stop to dive into the water at the most unexpected spots, observe the surrounding islands, and try to trace their histories while reflecting on how decisive the presence of the sea has been in shaping Athens' identity through time, and on what water truly means to an Athenian.

I would then take the car and drive up to Mount Parnitha, just an hour from the city center. I would hike along a route between the mountain refuges of Attica's highest peak, hoping for silence, walking through the woods, breathing in the fresh air, and encountering the Attica wildlife.

I couldn't end the day without a live traditional music gig and some small shared dishes (meze) in an underground taverna in the city center. Athens' music scene is defined by how it blends diversity and by the exceptional quality of its performances, as these are shaped by multicultural artists of mixed heritages.

3 I know Athens well, and whenever I experience a sense of disenchantment, I look for ways to renew my relationship with the city. What I love most about Athens is the sun and the daily connection with the Attica sky—whether it be the simple, clear blue, the pink sunsets, the accidental shapes of the clouds, or (very rarely) the gray before the rain. Athens' dry climate and constant sunlight are what I missed most when I was living abroad.

What I would like to see change in Athens is the use of public space, whether along the seaside or in city-center green parks, children's playgrounds, or mountain routes. I would like to see more green areas within parks, stronger state involvement in encouraging Athenians to use parks twelve months a year, beaches kept clean year-round so people can visit and swim, and more playgrounds in every neighborhood, renovated with bio-sustainable equipment, so that children can grow up healthy and everyday life can become easier for everyone who calls Athens home.

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1 *How does your work connect with the city and its people?*

2 If you only had 24 hours to spend in Athens, which are your 3 must-visit places?

3 What do you really like about Athens and what would you change if you could?

Vangelis Thanasis

Bar owner

1 Owning a bar in down-town Athens is something I wanted for a long time. I believe entering a bar allows you to leave the world behind you and free yourself in the most respectful and moral ground you can find—because the bar is a safe interactive space for me, and I stand by that, since I can observe our visitors' mood and how they cope with the world.

2 In a city like Athens, that's probably one of the most difficult questions you could ask. If I could divide my day into three—morning, noon and evening—and start from the center of Athens, we would start our day with coffee, cigarettes and a great view. I'd suggest meeting at Behold the Man in Exarcheia Square to grab a coffee and maybe a bite to eat, chat for 10 minutes, then walk up to Lycabettus to enjoy the view of the Athenian coast. I'll have to mention Nough Said and Alouatou for their exceptional hospitality and work in the field. Come noon, we'll need something to eat, of course, to keep us going through the day. I'd stop by Manari, which is one of my favorite spots and streets in Athens, to enjoy their various rib choices and their exceptional daily dishes along with some good wine. I'd also love to mention Pharao and Sinapos as must-visit spots for dinner.

3 I strongly believe that Athens is the kind of city that forms your character, whether you believe it or not, and I love that dynamic, which is precisely why I respect this city so much. It's a city that allows you to be anything you want and does all it can to help you truly discover it. From a job perspective, I am lucky enough to observe Athenians, and serve them, when they are at their happiest, at celebratory moments. Disclaimer: whether you're a tourist or a visitor, I will call you an Athenian, as I believe you should embrace the city and not miss a thing. I don't believe in flags or borders.

Of course, we don't live in an ideal society, but one of the greatest pleasures in this life is pressing pausing and escaping. Bars, restaurants, cinemas, theaters and the arts serve as an escape from a life that drains you. And believe me, this city drains you so much! Which is why it also directs you to find that kind of escape. Which is why I love this city. Yes, it's beautiful, but it's the ugliness that directs and inspires you.

By Panos Kougias and Nikos Markatos

Continued from Page One

Rescued horses at the facilities of Help Horses of Ymittos.

Easter: The Debate For Animals Returns- Unfortunately Not All Of Them

Easter often revives the conversation about animal rights—but sadly, not all animals are included

Maria Marolia, a founding member of Help Horses Ymittos, talks to *TO BHMA International Edition* about a sad state of affairs which, though it stems from institutional deficiencies, is allowed to persist by our "collective tolerance". She is clear that "the time to stay silent has passed."

What is your view on the continued use of donkeys, mules and other equines in tourist areas around Greece, especially in our current era of extreme weather events including heat waves?

Unfortunately, there is little real respect for equines in Greece. The people who really understand their needs and have the training and education required to manage them properly are few and far between.

What signs of exhaustion or abuse do you see most often in animals that work in the sun and heat? Are there signs of long-term deterioration or pain?

There are numerous signs, which usually couldn't be more obvious. We see animals that are dehydrated and malnourished, whose hooves have not received the attention they need. Tooth care, too, which is absolutely critical especially in horses which wear bridles, is totally absent. At the same time, inappropriate equipment and saddles can cause severe pain and even open wounds, which we see all the time. These are not isolated incidents; images like these reflect years of neglect and pain.

Do members of the public, whether locals or tourists, ever contact you with complaints about horses working tourist routes on Santorini, Rhodes, or elsewhere that are not being cared for properly? If so, how do you respond?

We receive complaints, which is only to be expected. However, we set up Help Horses Ymittos with a very specific objective in mind: rescuing the horses I myself found in a truly horrific state in the foothills of Mount Hymettus, in the Municipality of Kropia, in August 2023. There were more than 130 of them in all, and rescuing so many animals in a short space of time, without resources and infrastructure, continues to be an uphill struggle. Still, we already have just short of a hundred horses in our care, even though we started from scratch as recently as 2023. We have arranged for some of these horses to be adopted or fostered, too, and rescued other equines (Mogli from Karydochori, near Serres, for instance), but we simply can't take on any more. What we can—and always—do, is give people guidance in how to care for their animals properly. Because, in reality, lodging a complaint simply isn't enough. When there is no clear legal framework and virtually no mechanisms in place to enforce what legislation there is relating to equines and to pets, it's all too easy to pass the buck. Ultimately, there is no clear accountability. I'd like to add something particularly important: the abuse isn't limited to equines tourists ride and those that pull buggies. It's present in riding clubs, in equestrian sports and riding schools of every sort—indeed, wherever there are equines. You're just as likely to see a horse being abused in training for dressage or showjumping as you are a donkey being mistreated on Santorini.

Rescued horses at the facilities of Help Horses of Ymittos.

In your opinion, when does the use of these animals stop being "tradition" and cross over into exploitation or abuse?

That line is crossed when respect and knowledge are absent. Whether it's for tourist rides or activities or festivals and events, when an animal is placed under conditions that cause it intense stress, intense fear, pain and exhaustion, there isn't a "tradition" in the world that can justify it!

What would you say to the tourists who continue to pay for "experiences" like these, while ignoring the animals' pain and fatigue? Is there a way to offer rides, for instance, without causing the animals harm? What is the state doing? Is it supporting your efforts? What is the current legal framework in Greece?

Let's get something straight from the beginning: not everyone is an abuser. But someone who doesn't know about horses may not even recognize the abuse. Still, some things are crystal clear. No equine should have to work or be ridden when the temperature reaches 30°C or higher—regardless of the time of day. And they must be given proper breaks: no animal should ever be left tethered in the sun, without food or water, or remaining saddled or in harness. We should never ride or employ animals that are visibly underweight or dehydrated. We often hear the excuse "He's very old..." And yes, old animals don't gain weight easily and lack muscle—just like old people. Of course, that actually means we're placing even more of a burden on them! Ask yourself this: would you saddle your grandmother or grandfather with the super market shop? Would you put them to work? And one other thing: low prices don't make an experience an "opportunity". It just means that someone has cut corners somewhere—usually in the animals' food, care, space, veterinary care or equipment. A horse is not an object. It is a living creature with complex needs. As far the state is concerned, the overall picture is one of failure. There is no real protection in place for equines. In fact, it has got even worse. We experienced a legislative setback just after we started up, when responsibility for stray and unattended horses was removed from the Regions without being assigned elsewhere. That decision was taken by the Deputy Minister for Rural Development at the time, a certain Mr. Keletsis who remains part of the current Cabinet. This created a huge legislative gap. The legislative framework is not only incomplete, it is effectively non-existent. Even basic tools, such as identification forms or passports, have not been implemented properly. If there was any real will, there would be a clear and enforceable legal framework and a functional and specialized regulatory mechanism. That would include an animal welfare organization with a proven track record (in terms of the number of animals it cares for, per animal category and per region), veterinarians, and a special animal police force. Without them, we're talking about good intentions, not actual protection.

More broadly, what is society's moral responsibility toward animals that cannot protest for themselves? How can their voice be heard?

The time for silence or passing the buck is definitely over. Animals live like this today because we as a society tolerate it. If we want things to change, we have to change it ourselves, directly. We need to get informed and intervene, not turn a blind eye. These animals cannot advocate for themselves: as long as we stay silent and do nothing, the abuse will continue.

Travelers' Accounts of Orthodox Easter in the Ottoman Era

While the core religious rituals continued unchanged from the Byzantine tradition, historical accounts shed light on how the great feast day was experienced, expressed and remembered during the often dour era of Ottoman rule

Continued from Page One

Travelogues written by Western European travelers between the 16th and early 19th centuries are invaluable for the perspectives they offer on the centuries of Turkish rule, which were considered a dark and backward period for Hellenism.

However, the Orthodox Church, headed by a Patriarch who was considered the chief representative of the empire's Christian subjects, enjoyed a certain amount of autonomy in regulating their religious life and education. The Church also played a role in local governance, with several islands enjoying a still more autonomous status.

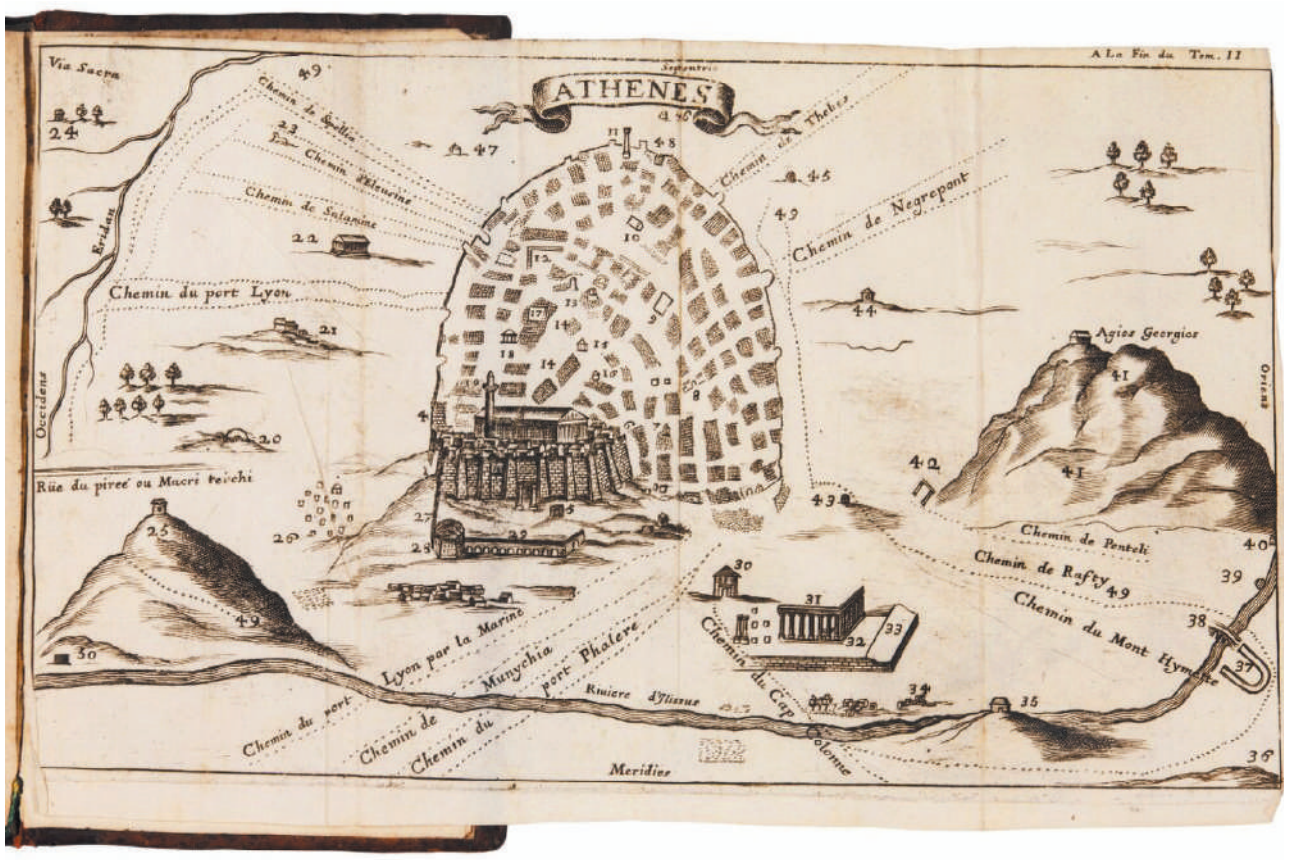
As a result, Easter celebrations were officially allowed, though always within the restrictions imposed by the Ottoman authorities on, for instance, the ringing of bells and religious processions through the streets.

Then and now, the great feast day of Holy Pascha, the culmination of Lent and Holy Week, celebrated the Resurrection of Christ. Increasingly though, it served as a symbol of Christian and Greek identity and emphasized continuity with the pre-Ottoman past. It also reinforced the distinction between the empire's *Rum* subjects and Muslim rulers though the use of an ecclesiastical language (Greek) different from the language of the state (Turkish) and the observance of different customs, strengthening communal bonds among the faithful.

Under Ottoman rule, Easter was also one of the few times when Christian communities gathered openly and collectively.

In his *A Journey into Greece* (1682), George Wheler describes the celebratory midnight Holy Saturday mass thus: "At Easter, the faithful celebrate the Resurrection with great devotion; all the churches are illuminated, and the people express extraordinary joy, saluting one another with 'Christ is Risen'."

Another 17th-century traveler, Jacob Spon, writes in *Voyage d'Italie, de Dalmatie, de Grèce et du Levant* (1678) that "the Greeks celebrate their Easter ceremonies with great devotion; they light many candles and spend almost the entire night in the churches" – a description of the all-night, candle-lit vigils.



A cover of Jacob Spon's Voyage d'Italie, de Dalmatie, de Grece, et du Levant, made in the year 1675. & 1676. Lyon: Antoine Cellier, 1678.

Orthodox faithful venerate the *Epitaphios* during the reverential Good Friday service.

Describing Greek Orthodox Easter in Ottoman-era Jerusalem a century and a half later, François-René de Chateaubriand notes in his *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem* (1811) that:

"The Easter celebration among the Greeks (Orthodox faithful) has something solemn and moving about it; the Resurrection is celebrated there with a unique pomp and fervor."

In *A Classical and Topographical Tour through Greece*, which was published in 1819, just two years before the start of the Greek War of Independence (1821-1829), Englishman Edward Dodwell describes the utterly sorrowful litany of Good Friday, the *Epitaphios*, thus:

"The ceremonies of the Greek church during Passion Week are peculiarly impressive; the procession on Good Friday is attended by crowds bearing lights, and chanting in a most mournful manner."

For the Epitaphios, Greek for "Lamentation at the Tomb" and one of the most moving services in the Orthodox Church, a decorated bier or canopy representing the tomb of Christ is placed at the center of the church as the liturgy commemorates the burial of Jesus after the Crucifixion.

The Epitaphios service takes place on the evening of Good Friday and is accompanied by a series of poetic hymns mourning Christ's death. Combined with psalms and readings reflecting sorrow, hope and eventual Resurrection, the dim lighting and candlelight produce a solemn and meditative atmosphere.

One of the most distinctive elements of this service is the procession, in which the Epitaphios is carried through the streets by clergy and parishioners as the bells toll.

Processions, litanies and customs

According to Prof. Manolis Varvounis, one notable prohibition during the Ottoman period concerned churches with domes. Most existing domed churches were converted into mosques, and the building of new places of worship of this kind was forbidden.

Varvounis, a professor of folklore in the Department of History and Ethnology at the Democritus University of Thrace, notes that while the Easter liturgy has remained largely unchanged, the Holy Thursday and Good Friday processions are new additions.

Dating from the late 18th century, the litanies, in which the congregation would emerge from the church and—originally—file around the place of worship, closely resemble the Catholic rite.

Prof. Varvounis told *To BHMA International Edition* that "experts in liturgies can't find too much information on actual processions. Yet the popular customs are the same as today: red eggs, fasting, the roasting of a lamb, celebrations with family and friends.

"So, Easter was not much different than the classic Greek Pascha of today. Gradually, some rites acquired certain national characteristics, such as the reciting of the phrase 'to scatter one's enemies', but that's not the crux of the custom."