

Broadcasting the Island: Sardegna 1 and the Archival Reconstruction of a Local Media Story

Myriam Mereu*

University of Cagliari (Italy)

Submitted: July 22, 2025 – Accepted: August 29, 2025 – Published: December 22, 2025

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to reflect upon Sardinian broadcasting through the analysis of one noteworthy case study: the establishment of a local television channel named Sardegna 1 in 1982 and its evolution in the regional mediascape over the 1980s. Adopting a methodology that incorporates archival research and oral history, the study addresses the difficulties involved in reconstructing the broadcaster's history considering the lack or inaccessibility of official archives. The analysis considers how many of Sardegna 1's materials, including newscasts and commercials, were lost due to factors such as tape reuse and technological obsolescence, indicating the challenges associated with local television preservation. Given the fragmented nature of local broadcasters' archives and the lack of comprehensive institutional databases, a multimedia methodology is essential. This approach integrates various archival source, ranging from sound recordings and video footage to newspaper articles and interviews, to reconstruct Sardegna 1's early years and its role in the evolving Italian television market. The interviews with former Sardegna 1 staff offered remarkable perspectives on the editorial, political, and cultural aspects of the channel, particularly during the years 1987–1989, a period impacted by financial difficulties and organizational changes. This study provides an account of the issues facing regional media archives and assesses the use of oral history as a mean to recover information about lost media content. Moreover, this case study highlights the critical role of archives in preserving the legacy of regional broadcasters and in shaping public memory and cultural identity.

Keywords: Archives; Audiovisual memory; Local television; Media history; Sardegna 1.

Acknowledgements

This contribution is part of the dissemination activities carried out within the ATLAS research project (PRIN 2020; Prot.: 2020NB4PWK). The author wishes to thank all the informants mentioned in the paper for their valuable insights and for sharing their precious memories. A special thank you goes to Giacomo Serrelli and Roberto Sini for providing important administrative and production documents from their private archives.

* ✉ myriam.mereu@unica.it

1 Introduction. Sailing the Seas of Local Television Archives

This paper pursues two interconnected goals: on the one hand, it aims to outline the main historical stages of Sardegna 1, a Sardinian local broadcaster based in Cagliari, from its establishment to the late 1980s; on the other hand, it will seek to reflect upon the role of institutional and private archives in reshaping the memory of local mediascape. Our research is situated within the larger context of the “archival turn” in television studies (De Leeuw 2012), where archives are considered important for the preservation, recollection, and reuse of cultural memory. Memory is indeed one of the key components of our study; as a “modality in which the past is made new again and again” (Lipsitz 2017: 121), memory symbolises both the foundation and the goal of archives in preserving data, documents, footage and handing them down to the future generations. By assuming the model of “Television as Cultural Memory” (Hagerdoorn 2013) as a reference point for our argument, we will address the technological and archival dimensions of memory, the ones that reconnect the “‘here and now’ to the ‘there and then’” (Lipsitz 2017: 121) of audiovisual and broadcasting media (cinema, radio, television) by means of remediation practices (Bolter and Grusin 1999) and revitalisation processes. The model proposed by Berber Hagerdoorn, based on Aleida Assmann’s theory of “canon and archive” (Assmann 2010), considers “more dynamic, diverse forms of engagement with the past to different users” and provides them with “a wider range of opportunities to develop specific memory practices in the multi-platform era” (Hagerdoorn 2013: 54); we therefore believe that the same pattern, split between remembering and forgetting, could be applied to the study of local television archives.

We are all well-aware of the importance of television as a documentary source and agent of history (Cicognetti et al. 1999: 7) and relying on the preservation of television heritage for research purposes is the first step to consider television—and its archive—“a material network of memory and a system of everyday memory-making” (Holdsworth 2011, Kindle edition). Methodological-related issues will be pivotal components throughout our analysis and understanding of how television archives work and what kind of materials they can return to us in terms of historical artefacts and media products. In this twofold attempt to consider the archive as both the chief purpose of our quest and the methodological tool to capture the very essence of our research, we will often refer to the concept of *archivability* in its multilayered array of usages, i.e. “the conceptual and pragmatic frameworks that facilitated television’s direct and indirect paths into archival spaces” (Bratslavsky 2025, Kindle edition). Another term that will guide us across “the fragmented geography of television archives” (Taurino and Aitaki 2024: 3) is the adjective *local*, enclosed within an insular context such as Sardinia is; in this sense, the notion of *island* itself gives us the size of the geographical scope of our research, having to trace back the remnants of the Sardinian television legacy. Since the archives we have accessed are all located in Sardinia, the localism we are referring to encompasses not only the broadcasting, production and reception dimensions but extends to the archival, storing and collecting activities we have undertaken during the research period. In addition to the “digging” work carried out in several institutional archives, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the “Studi Sardi” library in Cagliari, we have collected ten interviews¹ with former Sardegna 1’s staff members (six journalists and reporters, the news director, one technician, one cameraman, and the head of high-frequency transmission), which have shared with us valuable data and information about their work experience at Sardegna 1 back in the 1980s.² We have then adopted an oral history approach, bearing in mind the pros and the cons of such a methodology: oral sources are not objective, and are fickle and partial, too (Portelli 2007); our presence during the interviews might have affected or influenced the content of the testimonies, not to mention the reluctance to evoke past memories and episodes that may have caused sorrow and discomfort in the interviewee.

Due to the absence of an official television archive, we have turned to two private archives—those of Giacomo Serreli’s and Roberto Sini’s—for the recovery of useful production and administrative documents on one hand, and television products, such as newscast editions and adverts, on the other. Nonetheless, the word *archive* sounds somewhat overstated in this context, as these materials, previously digitised and stored in hard disks,

1. A selection of 57 audio excerpts from each interview is available on the AMS Historica database: <https://historica.unibo.it/entities/fonds/ca58f655-eb6f-4bba-9257-875016ca6f04> (Last accessed 25-06-25).

2. All the interviewees were based in the Cagliari studios located in via Venturi. Due to the difficulties to reach the people employed in the other provincial units (Oristano, Nuoro, Sassari and Olbia), we could not get any useful insights into their working experiences at Sardegna 1.

have been transmitted to us via email or Google Drive. When we ventured into this research enterprise, we had in mind the traditional image of an archive as a physical place where hundreds of boxes and dusty files are piled up waiting to be reopened and, possibly, give their small yet noteworthy contribution to local media and television history. After meeting the people involved in this research project, we realised that there would have not been any storehouses or basements ready to unearth their neglected and precious footage, nor brave archivists “tasked with significant work to resurrect obsolete video formats” (Frick 2025, Kindle edition). As for our case study, we can talk of digital rebirth of analogical records that are unlikely to rest in a real archival environment, thus the digitisation process that other local broadcasters—e.g., Videolina—have undertaken over the past decades cannot be considered.

As Emiliano Rossi effectively pointed out, in the Eighties “there was little awareness of the potential necessity to preserve broadcasted material, except for re-airing purposes” (Rossi 2024: 3): the high costs of records (U-matic and VHS tapes), together with the quick perishability of the recording materials, resulted in the permanent loss of adverts, newscasts, and cultural and current affairs programmes aired in the early production years (1986–1990). The impossibility to access a physical archive also implies the lack of tangible objects and artefacts, and has yet another consequence, i.e., the necessity to convert the survival analogue records into digital files. The “pervasive digitization and datafication of culture” (Taurino and Aitaki 2024: 2) poses a problem of gradual dispersion and immateriality of the audiovisual heritage.

2 Freedom of the Airwaves in Sardinia

9 June and 6 September 1975 are two historical dates for local broadcasting in Sardinia: the former marks the birth of the first free radio,³ Radiolina, aka “the little radio”, whilst the latter reminds us of the foundation of the first Sardinian local television, Videolina. The two stations were founded by two young enthusiastic pioneers of the airwaves, Nicola “Nichi” Grauso⁴ and Michele Rossetti, and both are still airing their programmes through a wide variety of media channels and devices (television, the Web, apps). Back in 1975, the launch of Radiolina firstly and then Videolina was meant to challenge the monopoly of the national public service and start an alternative broadcasting industry on a local scale which could bring together the interests of both audience and stakeholders upon local realities; it also represented a viable opportunity for other private radio and tv stations to achieve their desire of a free and independent broadcasting. According to Aldo Grasso, the emergence of local broadcasting was a national phenomenon which unveiled the “*Italia del sommerso*, an unknown Italy, an Italy that was believed to have come to an end” (Grasso 2006: 17, our translation). Ottavio Olita, former journalist at *La Nuova Sardegna* and anchorman at Rai’s regional studios between 1988 and 2013, holds that the rise of private broadcasters in Sardinia lay in the interest of national advertisers who seek profitable connections with local television channels and, consequently, build loyalty among local audiences (Olita 1981: 66). The period between the late 1970s and the early 1980s was exceptionally prolific within the Sardinian mediascape: in 1979, with a live broadcast from Sardinia the transmissions of Rai’s Terza Rete—the third channel of the national public service⁵—began, since one of its institutional missions was to experimentally launch the production of television programs by means of new electronic media (Olla 1994: 184). One amongst the many tv channels that sprouted in those “crowded years” (Sangiovanni 2021) is Sardegna 1, whose name and history are deeply intertwined with the business activities of the Ragazzo family. The launch of Sardegna 1 as a new private broadcaster in the Sardinian mediascape, back in the early 1980s, meant three main, interwoven things: first, the ownership, represented by the Ragazzo family, intended to challenge the monopoly of local broadcasting held by Videolina,⁶ by opposing a clever and skilled competitor, primarily in

3. Although Radiolina is often reported to have been the first free radio station established in Sardinia, we must recall the experience of Radio Sardegna or Radio Brada, “the first voice of liberated Italy”, whose airing activity had started in 1943 from a cave situated in the inland (Olla 1994). Radio Sardegna was amongst the radio stations that broadcasted the news of Germany’s surrender the end of World War II on 7 May 1945.

4. Nicola Grauso, often depicted as a visionary in the media industry, died on May 18, 2025, at the age of 76.

5. Gianni Olla catalogued all the documentaries and programmes produced by Rai’s regional production studios between 1979 and 1992 (Olla 2008).

6. In his interview, director Sandro Angioni speaks about the necessity to offer the audience a viable alternative to Videolina in order to guarantee pluralism and allow other television channels to broadcast their own products. This excerpt of the interview with Angioni,

news-making. Secondly, the existence of another broadcasting subject, though in a local context, allowed all the political parties to take the floor in the public debate and to be granted visibility on television, thus engaging new (and old) audiences across the island. Finally, the television was a means to keep the relations with local stakeholders, such as institutions and entrepreneurs, and reinforce the economic links with the regional business and manufacturing network, which could guarantee a valid financial support in the production and advertising chain.

Alongside the establishment of the company Sardegna 1, 1982 witnessed the arrival of Maurizio Costanzo at Videolina studios, after he had been dismissed from the public service due to his alleged membership to P2, i.e., Licio Gelli's masonic lodge. Costanzo, who had hosted several talk shows on Raiuno, launched a new format which was aired on Videolina after dinner, as its title and its position in the schedule cleverly suggest: *Dopo cena*, tailored on the model of *Bontà loro* (1976–77), was “a performance of life” (Grasso 2006: 7) which gave the floor to some unknown people to present their personal problems to the host, sparking a debate that involved the other guests. *Dopo cena* seemed to mirror one of Costanzo's most famous slogans, “everything else is life,” which ironically highlights the intent to turn every day, seemingly insignificant problems into spectacle.⁷ Costanzo returned to Videolina in 1992 with a completely revamped edition of *Dopo cena*: prestigious guests—including President Francesco Cossiga—a studio audience, an osmotic extension of the audience at home, and a focus on local topics (politics, economy, medicine, culture, and society), in a succession of questions, little jokes, and more or less good-natured remarks in perfect Costanzo style. It was the triumph of infotainment: a blend of interviews, face-to-face conversations, debates on hot topics, and bus-stop-style chatter with a regional-popular flavour.

In the mid-eighties, Nicola Grauso led a group that held the broadcasting rights to five television stations: La Voce Sarda (which aired Rete 4 programs, for which it held the rights until 1988); Telecostasmeralda (a station based in northern Sardinia that broadcast Italia 1 programs until 1986); BiBiSi (part of the EuroTV network); Videonord (a Sassari-based television station belonging to the TV Port network of Cagliari); and Rafin (which aired films and TV series broadcast by Rete A); as well as three radio stations: Radiolina, La Voce Sarda Radio, and Radio Internazionale Costa Smeralda (Franceschi 1985). Videolina thus became a service company that, in addition to handling its own programming, provided technical assistance and production support to the affiliated smaller broadcasters (Corda 2015).

In that very period, Sardegna 1 was still to find its distinctive voice to draw the attention of the Sardinian viewers, and Videolina was too powerful as a competitor to be knocked down on the same playing field it had contributed to shape over the previous ten years. But then something exciting happened, and we must wait until 1987 for a change of course.

3 The Archive Strikes Back

We will now focus on the archival research we have conducted in several institutional, public and private archives to collect some of the scattered pieces of our case study. Based on a set of over ninety administrative records, including articles of incorporation, board meeting minutes, financial reports, and appointment deeds, preserved at the Chamber of Commerce in Cagliari,⁸ we have reconstructed the early history and financial trajectory of the company Sardegna 1 LLC (later Ltd.). In the absence of a robust bibliography on the subject, these archival materials have proven essential to our understanding of the company's origins and internal operations. Sardegna 1 was formally established on 22 December 1982, when Paolo Ragazzo and his three children—Riccardo, Carolina and Valentina—gathered in the office of notary Arturo Saba, in Cagliari, and signed the articles of incorporation of a limited liability company named “Sardegna Uno – s.r.l.”. A physician with entrepreneurial ambitions, Ragazzo had previously ventured into the publishing industry with the local

realized on April 19, 2024, is available at the following link: <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14008/82066> (last accessed 07-07-25).

7. In the framework of another research project upon the “neotelevisione” era in Sardinia, we were able to recover the 1982, 1992 and 1993 editions of *Dopo cena* from the archives of Videolina.

8. Refer to Mereu (2024) for the survey on the administrative and financial documents of Sardegna 1 kept at the historical archive of the Chamber of Commerce.

newspaper *Tutto Quotidiano* (1974–1978), a project that ended in financial losses and bankruptcy. The foundation of the TV channel Sardegna 1 was reportedly conceived as a graduation gift for his son Riccardo (Aresti 1993), who was appointed sole director of the company, as documented in the incorporation records. Riccardo and his sisters Carolina and Valentina owned a small share—3 million liras—of the whole corporation stock, which amounted to 20 million Italian liras, whilst their father owned the largest share (11 million). At the time of the foundation of Sardegna 1, in 1982, the number of local stations in Italy amounted to 1594 (Barca 1999: 110), and Videolina was the most powerful private television based in Sardinia, with approximately 400.000 daily viewers (Zuccarelli 1983).

In 1984, the initial corporation stock of the company was increased to 500.000.000 liras (Corda 2015), thus speeding up the completion of the broadcasting system across the province of Cagliari, which was the only area provided with connection networks during the 1984–1986 period. One of the documents kept in the archive of the Chamber of Commerce proves that the “experimental period” is even prior to 1984: a statement issued by Riccardo Ragazzo on 4 January 1983 reports the ownership of transmission devices used for experimental broadcasting in “horizontal polarisation” on channels 58 and 61 of the fifth wideband around Cagliari.

In our endeavour to encompass the whole business activities of Sardegna 1, we have also turned our attention to two affiliated companies: Publiuno s.r.l. and Videon Sardegna s.r.l. Publiuno, founded on 29 October 1986 and operational from 1989 to its closure on 28 February 2020, functioned primarily as an advertising agency. Its core business included the acquisition, management, and sale of advertising slots as well as media licenses for radio, print, and television. It was also involved in the production of commercials, films, and other audiovisual content. Videon, established on 19 May 1988 and headquartered in via Venturi (former location of Sardegna 1’s studios before their 2021 acquisition by L’Unione Sarda Ltd.), focused on the creation and distribution of radio and television content, including editorial activities related to the preservation and dissemination of its cultural and artistic productions. Sardegna 1 held the main share of the company, and Sergio Vacca, also in the board of directors of Sardegna 1, held a nominal share of 10.000 Liras. Back in the 1990s, Videon, equipped with a cutting-edge production infrastructure, “produced 5 daily editions of the newscast and provided the audience with one of the most substantial and challenging schedules among independent private broadcasters” (Aresti 1993, our translation). Unfortunately, we could not collect (thus digitise) any of these outstanding programmes produced by Videon Sardegna, but there are a few—mostly documentaries produced in the 1990s, recorded on videotape—kept in some libraries and at the Cineteca Sarda in Cagliari. These materials might be extremely helpful to study the contents and the editorial choices of the broadcaster and to retrieve some production data.

Having accessed the archives of *La Nuova Sardegna* and *L’Unione Sarda* newspapers at the “Studi Sardi” library in Cagliari, we have collected a bulk of television schedules related to a time span of more than six years, from May 1984 to December 1990. While flicking through the onscreen editions of *L’Unione Sarda*, we have come across the first-ever daily schedule of Sardegna 1 published on 15 May 1984; the broadcasts started at 1 pm, structured in a wide variety of genres and programs, mainly American tv series and films, and ended at 12 am. Other than imported foreign programs, as in other local broadcasters, there were four daily editions of the Sardegna Flash newscast starting at 8 pm: each edition lasted as long as five minutes and apparently without recorded or live news report. We do not even know whether the pieces of news were launched by an anchor, or they were just read by a speaker, in voice off. As Carlo Figari writes in his blog, the very first newscast was a “radio-telegiornale”, that is, a live radio-newscast hosted by journalist Alessandra Sallemi (Figari 2021).⁹ Searching the schedules of Sardegna 1 that we have collected from *L’Unione Sarda*’s digital archive, we learn that the Sardegna Flash newscast was aired until 14 July 1984, then it was interrupted abruptly and the whole tv schedule decreased significantly, up to a six-hour-long—and afterwards even shorter—programming composed mostly of tv series, cartoons, and films. These are the early stages of the broadcaster, when it was based in Villa Mibelli, owned by Paolo Ragazzo; in the following years—1985 and 1986—the newscast ceased to be aired, so that the whole schedule was drastically reduced to only films and tv series. On 23 November 1986, the early programs—cartoons—were broadcast at 8.30 am and the last ones—usually a tv series—were

9. The name of Alessandra Sallemi is never mentioned by any of the interviewees involved in our research. Nevertheless, interviewed by Andrea Corda in 2015, and, according to what Corda writes in his article, she would have been the anchorwoman at Sardegna 1 newscast before 1987.

to be aired at 11.40 pm: these might be interpreted as the early signs of a brand-new broadcasting enterprise that was about to sprout.

The second and more enduring life of Sardegna 1 began in 1986. Entrepreneur Sergio Zuncheddu joined the company's board of directors and his share as president of Telesardinia Ltd. was deposited in the incorporation stock. Sandro Angioni, former reporter at Videolina, was appointed by Paolo Ragazzo and the board of directors to form the editorial staff of the upcoming newscast. A proper "trading season" began, as Angioni hired—though it would be more correct to say "stole"—the best reporters, cameramen and technicians¹⁰ from Videolina and other private tv, such as La Voce Sarda and Telesardinia, which had been founded in 1985 by Sergio Zuncheddu, and built a solid and professionally skilled team designed to ensure a complete and up-to-date news agenda to the entire Sardinian population. News-making and news broadcasting had always been the "showpiece of the schedule" at Sardegna 1 (Figari 2021), as the ownership had conceived the project of an all-news tv channel modeled after the CNN, as Roberto Sini has stated in his interview.¹¹ The reporters who joined the newsroom were Nicola Scano, editor-in-chief Giacomo Serreli, Fiorella Ferruzzi, Vera Coppa, Maria Luisa Busi (then one of the best-known anchors at Raiuno newscast), Puppo Gorini, Gianni Zanata and Ignazio Artizzu—the former had worked in other local radios, magazines, and televisions, mainly at Videolina, whilst the latter did his internship at Sardegna 1 before enrolling in the Italian Association of Journalists. Amongst the professional cameramen and technicians who were recruited from other local broadcasters were Angelo Caredda, Sandro Crisponi, Antonio Garrucciu, Gigi Perra and Roberto Sini. In his personal account, Giacomo Serreli (Serreli 2021) recalls the Sunday's editions of the newscast, which were an absolute novelty in the Sardinian mediascape. Although the main studios were in Cagliari, there were other peripheral newsrooms scattered all around the region; their presence ensured an effective and minute coverage of the latest news items, and some of them were even able to connect directly to the central newsroom and send their videos by means of specific transfer infrastructures (Serreli 2021).

4 Excavating the Archives: The Case of Dino Marteddu and Other Forgotten Frames

To explore the newscasts and programming aired on Sardegna 1 during the 1980s, we relied on materials preserved in the private archive of Roberto Sini. Given the limited time span covered by the available documents, our analysis centres on the pivotal year of 1987, which represents both the height and decline of what could be described as the broadcaster's heyday. Valuable production and administrative records were shared with us by both Sini and Giacomo Serreli, a former journalist at Sardegna 1 between 1987 and 1988. These included press releases documenting strikes by journalists and technical staff in 1987 and 1988, the transcript of a meeting with Nicola Grauso (founder of Radiolina and Videolina), employee dismissal letters, and formal communications from the editorial staff to the ownership. As fruitfully demonstrated in other studies, cataloguing primary sources such as administrative and production documentation that can only be retrieved from institutional and private archives is "an important pillar of academic television research" (Hagedoorn and Agterberg 2016: 171).

From a technical standpoint, the archive also yielded documents such as newscaster rosters ("turni di lettura del tg") and a press release scheduled to be read during the newscast edition on 13 November 1987. In total, over thirty printed items were collected,¹² most of them related to the financial instability the station experienced in 1987, including data on company restructuring following its September 1987 affiliation with the Odeon TV network. This partnership was expected to benefit Sardegna 1's ownership by providing access to external high-quality programming at no additional cost, and by potentially increasing advertising revenue.

The economic and editorial challenges Sardegna 1 faced between 1987 and 1989 were emphasized by all inter-

10. In his interview, Sandro Angioni recalls some of the names he had gathered to form the main newsroom at Sardegna 1: <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14008/82167> (last accessed 10-07-25).

11. The excerpt of the interview with Roberto Sini is available at the link <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14008/82162>.

12. The scanned copies of the administrative and production documentation of Sardegna 1 are accessible on the AMS Historica database: <https://historica.unibo.it/handle/20.500.14008/85312> (last accessed 25-06-25).

viewees. Fiorella Ferruzzi described the period as “hot”,¹³ while Vera Coppa recalled multiple crisis episodes stemming from elevated production expenses and resulting in staff reductions,¹⁴ which affected reporters, technicians, and office workers alike. The administrative documents frequently refer to dismissals using the euphemism *messa in libertà* (“released”).

Thanks to Sini’s archive, we were also able to retrieve two complete editions of the Sardegna 1 newscast, and one full episode of the sports bulletin hosted by then-director Sandro Angioni on 5 April 1987. While the broadcast focused on regional football scores, it stands out for its delivery style, the anchor’s tone, and the active involvement of four male reporters, three from the main newsroom in Cagliari and one from the Sassari-based unit. According to Sini, these materials were preserved “solo per scrupolo,” or “just in case,” a gesture that has proved invaluable for historical reconstruction.

In our effort to foreground 1987 as a watershed year for Sardegna 1, we have singled out one significant “caso di cronaca”—i.e., news item—which perfectly outlines the editorial line of the early Sardegna 1’s newsroom. On 6 January, the first real edition of the Sardegna 1 news broadcast was aired at 2 pm, starting a fortunate and productive season of news-making and broadcasting at the newborn local television based in Cagliari. Amongst the main international news items addressed by the editorial staff at Sardegna 1 was the kidnapping of Sardinian worker Dino Marteddu and his colleague Giorgio Marchiò, occurred on 27 December 1986. Marteddu and Marchiò, employed at Salini Costruzioni, a company specialised in the construction of infrastructural works worldwide, were building a road in the jungle, not far from Lake Tana, in North Ethiopia, when a commando of Ethiopian guerrilla fighters of the EPRP, opponent of Mengistu’s regime, assaulted the worksite causing more than 40 victims—35 soldiers of Mengistu’s army and 10 Ethiopian workers –, and kidnapped 24 people, including Marteddu and Marchiò. News published on national newspapers, such as *l’Unità*, reported Marchiò to be amongst the injured people, but there was no evidence of this fact. In the same article on *l’Unità*, Dino Marteddu is reported to be *cagliaritano*, i.e., from Cagliari, whereas he was from San Vito, a small village which is some 65 km away from the capital city of Sardinia.

In early January 1987, journalist Cesare Corda and cameraman Antonio Garrucciu set off from Cagliari to Khartoum, Sudan, to get first-hand information about the kidnapping of the two men, an event that Cesare Corda recounted in detail in his book, *Clandestino in Etiopia: alla ricerca degli italiani rapiti*, published some thirty years later.¹⁵ Due to the lack of archive footage related to the news broadcast by Sardegna 1 back in 1987, we have based our research on Corda’s book, which is the most reliable and complete source to date, on newspapers articles and footage found online. As for the interview collected, there is one which is particularly rich in details about the kidnapping and Corda’s reportage:

The very first remarkable report we do is “On the trail of Dino Marteddu” / which is a short article that *L’Unione Sarda* has published in its international section without realising the importance of the news item / back then *L’Unione Sarda* and Videolina were already in the same editorial group. [...] I call Cesare [Corda] / and together we reach out to his [Dino Marteddu’s] wife // [...] we then set a fierce journalistic machine in motion.¹⁶

From Corda’s book, we learn that Garrucciu met the Italian ambassador, Francesco Lo Prinzi,¹⁷ who was all but informed about the kidnappers. Another interesting element is the meeting with another Italian reporter, Massimo Alberizzi from *Corriere della Sera*, who was staying in the same hotel in Khartoum. Corda, constantly in contact with director Angioni, did his first report as soon as he got to the hotel; the report was immediately aired in the 8pm newscast edition. The presence of a local television to investigate upon a transnational and domestic case highlights two important elements: on the one hand, the possibility for Sardegna 1 to be the

13. Listen to Fiorella Ferruzzi speaking of the “hot period” at Sardegna 1: <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14008/82151>.

14. In her interview, Vera Coppa spoke about her dismissal when Sardegna 1 was administered by Antonio Costantino in the early ’90s: <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14008/82172> (last accessed 27-06-2025).

15. In 2019, journalist Ettore Gobbato published a spy story based on this event, *Tana beles. Intrigo alla diga italiana*.

16. The whole excerpt of Sandro Angioni’s interview about the case of Dino Marteddu is available at the link <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14008/82106>.

17. This is the name mentioned in an article published in the Italian newspaper *l’Unità* on February 6, 1987, though Cesare Corda writes “Salvatore Lo Prinzi” in his book.

first to step in an international hotspot and make the world aware of its existence. Since Marteddu was a Sardinian worker, it was normal for a Sardinian broadcaster to address his case, knowing that many Sardinian viewers would have been emotionally involved and would have been watching the newscast with compelling participation. On the other hand, Sardegna 1 became a reference point for other national media seeking for details and information on the Marteddu affair; it felt like Sardegna 1 had come out from a provincial and rather discreet dimension, and suddenly gained unprecedented visibility, from a local television context to a global media scenario. The study of a local—and regional—tv broadcaster underlines the size of the phenomenon and the relation between the concepts of globalization and localization. As underlined by Diego Salvatore, “local television is naturally tied to its home territory” (Salvatore 2007: 77), and this fact can be easily noticed in the schedule of local broadcasters focused on local news items and events, especially in the news-making sector. Thus, Salvatore proposes a model of *glocal* television, that is, a concept capable of relating the local and the global from a perspective of interdependence, mainly regarding the distribution and reception of national and international tv products on a local scale.

Because of the scarcity of archival footage related to Sardegna 1 programming, we have turned to other videos available online, such as the program *30 anni fa*, which aired on Videolina in 2017 and is now accessible on the network’s website.¹⁸ It is interesting to notice the news headline about the release of Dino Marteddu in February 1987: “Liberato l’operaio rapito dai guerriglieri” (“Released worker kidnapped by the guerrilla fighters”), which focuses on the release of the man, omitting his full name and other information, such as the place where he had been kidnapped. In the video, Marteddu smiles at the cameras and the journalists, answers the clumsy questions about his captivity, that he recalls as “an adventure”, and describes his kidnappers as “friends”—the word “friends” is used quite a lot by Marteddu in the interviews he granted to the Sardinian local newspapers after his release. His being treated as a friend among friends during his 40 days of captivity is also curiously highlighted in a question that Marteddu asked a journalist from *L’Unione Sarda* (8 February 1987’s edition): “Avete visto la televisione?” (“Did you see the news on tv?”), assuming that the television was the only medium which could show him while hunting in the woods with the rifle he had been given by the guerrilla fighters of the ERPR, thus providing evidence of his safety. Dino Marteddu’s “sardità”, i.e., his being a Sardinian man, contributed to give resonance to his capture within the Sardinian audience. The wait for news and updates about his captivity outlined a circumscribed and close-knit “imagined community” (Anderson 1983) reunited in front of the tv screen, as if it was the technological version of a fireplace, the ideal place for traditional and folk storytelling in rural Sardinia. In addition to that, the possibility, for the broadcaster, of dealing with such an acclaimed case highlights another important feature: the establishment of an “accented” newscast (Naficy 2001), whose language and style could be easily acknowledged and received as Sardinian, would have engaged an increasingly growing and loyal audience across the island.

According to the accounts we have been given during the interviews, Sardegna 1 was the first local television to send its troupe over to Khartoum and to get to talk to Dino Marteddu on the phone, thanks to some personal contacts and the help provided by Armandino Corona, great chief of the Grand Orient of Italy, a *masonic* grand lodge founded in 1805. For the records, Corona’s name (and fame) is also linked to the foundation of Sardegna 1, and he is believed to be Paolo Ragazzo’s mentor and advisor in the launch of the television (Cabasino 2019, Figari 2021). All the people interviewed, former reporters and technicians employed at Sardegna 1, maintained that Cesare Corda and Antonio Garrucciu were the first to get to Khartoum, earlier than reporters from Videolina and national broadcasters, getting the jump even on the main national newspapers, such as *Corriere della Sera*, which had to rely on Sardegna 1’s newsroom to acquire information about the kidnapping and the subsequent release of Marteddu and Marchiò. By reporting this extraordinary event in such a careful and detailed way, Cesare Corda became “part of the news” (Meyrowitz 1985) and the public perceived him to be a more reliable and sympathetic reporter than any newspaper journalists. Thanks to his reportage from Africa and his tireless work at Sardegna 1’s, Cesare Corda started profitable cooperation with Canale 5 and Arrigo Levi, editor-in-chief of the weekly news programme *Tivù Tivù* in 1987 and 1988.

Given the centrality of information in the broadcaster’s agenda and schedule, the only records we have suc-

18. The 6th episode of the special programme *30 anni fa* was aired on 13 November 2017 and is now available on Videolina’s webpage: https://www.videolina.it/articolo/video/2017/11/14/30_anni_fa_2017_puntata_6_parte_1_13_11_2017-80-666037.html (last accessed 21-07-2025). Videolina has been doing substantial work to retrieve and enhance its archival material through an extensive archive-based programming.

ceeded in retrieving from Roberto Sini's archive are two editions of the newscast aired in April 1987, one hosted by Ignazio Artizzu and the other by Maria Luisa Busi, and the special program *A colpi di Spot*, dedicated to the 1989 regional elections, also curated by Maria Luisa Busi. The latter is an exceptionally interesting report, both in terms of content and language; it opens with some historical photos of Cagliari in the early 20th century and the off-screen voice of *su bandidori*, the figure who announces the decree to the population: "*A mesudi' in pratza 'e crèsia chistionat a sa populatzioni unu sennori de su partidu liberali*," literally: "at noon in the church square a gentleman from the Liberal Party will hold a rally". From Campidanese Sardinian, the program shifts to the refined, accent-free Italian of Maria Luisa Busi, who takes us from the past into the present: two different ways of doing politics and engaging the electorate—from the village square to television, "an ideal tool for entering people's homes / for reaching the public," as Busi says in voice-over. In her polished style, Busi addresses several topics, such as the massive use of advertisements on tv to persuade the electorate.

Before we conclude our overview of the (too few) digitised archival materials we have managed to rescue from oblivion, we shall have a quick glance at the programmes produced in the immediate aftermath of the editorial and financial crisis at Sardegna 1. When Antonio Costantino was appointed sole administrator of Sardegna 1 Ltd. in December 1991, the company experienced a modest economic recovery, and new broadcasts began to be produced. That same year, Sardegna 1 sponsored concerts by three renowned American artists—Liza Minnelli, Ray Charles, and Barry White —, gaining immediate returns in terms of reputation and visibility for the broadcaster. What remains of the other broadcasts and programmes produced by Videon Sardegna and aired on Sardegna 1 during Costantino's administration is a constellation of titles, genres, and brief descriptions retrieved from local magazines (Rossi 1996) and newspapers. These include: *Ad occhi aperti*, a talk show hosted by Giorgio Melis, deputy editor of *La Nuova Sardegna*; *Cara Sardegna*, hosted by Nicola Scano; *A tavola con noi*, a cooking show focused on Sardinian culinary traditions; *Mare Moda Miti*, a format that received an Oscar for independent television productions and was even acquired by other local stations (Aresti 1993); *Sportello impresa*, a weekly program hosted by journalist Carmina Conte that addressed issues related to Sardinia's socio-economic development; *Più donna*, hosted by Vera Coppa and Rosanna Romano, which explored the condition of women in Sardinian society; and *Tg dei ragazzi* ("Kids Newscast"), created by Costantino himself. During the interview, Roberto Sini told us that before joining the Odeon TV network in 1987 Sardegna 1 aired content from SACIS, the company licensed to handle the commercial distribution of Rai programming. There were shows by Il Trio, such as *Il tastomatto*, directed by Enzo Trapani and produced in 1985 (now available on RaiPlay). Unfortunately, as far as we are concerned, none of these programmes is available in either analogic or digital format; in this sense, Sardegna 1 perfectly fits the profile of the television channel "characterised by its 'transience', 'ephemerality', 'forgetability' (sic), and even more seriously, [...] responsible for the 'undermining of memory'" (Holdsworth 2011), the very memory television archives are expected to preserve and protect from irreparable loss and amnesiac.

5 Conclusion

This paper set out to investigate the early development and archival legacy of Sardegna 1, a Sardinian local broadcaster that emerged in the 1980s within the expanding and increasingly competitive regional mediascape. Through a combination of oral history and archival research, we have reconstructed the station's formative years, mapped its editorial strategies, and contextualised its evolution within both regional dynamics and broader national media trends.

The study has demonstrated that, in the absence of formal and centralised television archives, it is often the scattered holdings of private individuals, institutional repositories, and local press materials that enable scholars to reassemble fragmented media histories. The case of Sardegna 1 exemplifies how audiovisual memory can survive outside of traditional archival frameworks—through hard drives, personal collections, digital transfers, and oral recollections. In doing so, it also underlines the precariousness and vulnerability of regional television heritage, especially in contexts where media preservation was not historically prioritised.

By focusing on the events of 1987—a turning point in the station's editorial trajectory—we gained insight into both the socio-political function of local television and its capacity to respond to global issues from a distinctively local perspective. The case of the Marteddu kidnapping illustrates the emergence of a "glocal" me-

dia logic, in which Sardegna 1 momentarily stepped into the global spotlight while retaining a deeply rooted regional identity. This dual anchoring—local and transnational—resonates with recent scholarship on “accented” or *glocal* broadcasting.

From a methodological standpoint, the combination of archival excavation and oral testimony proved both fruitful and necessary. While acknowledging the limits of subjectivity and memory, we found that oral history can fill crucial gaps left by missing documents and scarce audiovisual materials, especially when verified against other available sources. The interviews conducted with former Sardegna 1's staff not only enriched the factual reconstruction but also helped capture the affective, professional, and ideological investments tied to the station's identity.

In conclusion, this study reinforces the critical importance of recovering and preserving local broadcast histories, often at risk of disappearance yet vital to understanding how media systems interact with communities, identities, and regional cultures. As television archives continue to evolve in the digital age, there is an urgent need for more comprehensive policies of preservation, digitisation, and access, especially for marginal and local broadcasters. Sardegna 1's story reminds us that behind every archive, be it official or improvised, there are narratives waiting to be reconnected, retold, and revalued.

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Myriam Mereu – University of Cagliari (Italy)

✉ myriam.mereu@unica.it

Myriam Mereu, after earning her PhD in Philological and Literary Studies at the University of Cagliari, embarked on a fruitful research path in the field of cinema and television. She has served multiple times as a research fellow in various projects on film and audiovisual media, including the PRIN 2020 project "ATLas – Atlante delle televisioni locali". Her interests range from linguistic filmology to studies on voice and orality, from the relationship between cinema and literature to documentary and non-fiction cinema. More recently, she has developed a passion for television series, with a particular focus on the discursive and narrative practices of Italian teen dramas, which she has explored in several articles. She is also the author and host of radio and television programs in the Sardinian language. Her first monograph, *Le voci dello schermo. Le lingue nel cinema sardo contemporaneo*, was published by Mimesis in 2024.