

Call for Papers-  
Interdisciplinary Doctoral School  
University of Ljubljana - Study program GOUVILES - TELEMMe

**Eastern Mediterranean coastal and island environments: natural  
resources, their uses and perceptions (15th-18th centuries)**  
**Ljubljana, June 29<sup>th</sup>-July 1<sup>st</sup> 2023**

The **Eastern Mediterranean** has recently become the setting for an increasing number of studies in environmental history, drawing on data kept in archives, on archeological material, as well as on paleoenvironmental research. Among others, big data paleoecology has improved our understanding of land, sea and human history in the region<sup>1</sup>. Keeping the same interdisciplinary approach, this doctoral school will focus on the **island as well as mainland coastal environments** embedded in their broader maritime and hinterland connections. The event will seek to identify **similarities and differences in the management of natural resources** at stake in the region during the centuries preceding the rise of industrialization.

From the Northern Adriatic to the so-called “Levantine” coasts, political rivalries, including, among others, Ottoman, Habsburg and Venetian, were often challenged by the durability and lasting legacy of maritime trade, which in turn allowed for high levels of local economic specialization. Questioning or assessing the impact of political boundaries on environmental transformations has indeed been a long-term objective of Mediterranean studies, from Fernand Braudel to Faruk Tabak. As a result, it is now important to trace the **diversity of policies implemented in different places**, in order to better understand the way political structures reacted to – and sometimes also triggered – ecological changes at different scales. The aim of this event is, therefore, to consider human-environment interactions by focusing on **economic, social and administrative actors**, whether local or distant, their management of natural resources, their evolving perceptions of their natural environments, and the ensuing **ecological impacts and legacy in the Adriatic and the Eastern Mediterranean islands and coasts**, from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The workshop invites mainly, but non-exclusively, **Master’s, PhD students and early career researchers** of history, archival studies, archaeology, archaeobotany, archaeozoology, palynology, and palaeoclimatology. Three main themes will be examined:

<sup>1</sup> E.g., John Haldon, Neil Roberts et alii, “The climate and environment of Byzantine Anatolia: integrating science, history and archaeology”, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 45-2, 2014, pp. 113-161; Adam Izdebski, Jordan Pickett, Neil Roberts, Tomasz Waliszewski, “The environmental, archaeological and historical evidence for regional climatic changes and their societal impacts in the Eastern Mediterranean in Late Antiquity”, *Quaternary Science Reviews*, 136, 2016, pp. 189-208; Alan Mikhail (ed.), *Water on sand: environmental histories of the Middle East and North Africa*, Oxford University Press, 2013; Johannes Preiser-Kapeller, “A collapse of the Eastern Mediterranean? New results and theories on the interplay between climate and societies in Byzantium and the Near-East, ca 1000-1200 AD”, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 65, 2015, pp. 195-242.

1) **Primary sources, be they written documents, paleodata, or archeological material.**

How can their creation, selection, organization, and current perceptions influence scientific inquiry? Historians need to address the heuristic strategies at stake in documenting the environmental history of past societies. Both the content and the types of archival information strongly depend on the aims of historical actors, be they public or private. This aspect is all the more important, since researchers sometimes investigate separately the many archive centers of the Adriatic and the Eastern Mediterranean. Bringing documents together could lead scientific work to challenge past and present borders. Likewise, studies based on past legacies preserved in the landscape (archives of nature) and other material sources, all studied by archaeology, archaeobotany, archaeozoology, palynology, and paleoclimatology, equally produce knowledge through a process of information selection which deserves to be examined and questioned.

2) **Environmental transformations in periods of political, social and economic change.**

How can researchers of today detect the patterns of continuity or discontinuity in the landforms, the past flora and fauna, the aquatic environments and the uses of natural resources in general in periods of war, social unrest or economic tensions? And more specifically, to what extent can we detect the ecological impacts of conquests and their long-term environmental legacies in the different “imperial” settings which characterized the Adriatic and the Eastern Mediterranean in the Early Modern period? This theme is an invitation to examine the local consequences of regional changes, such as one island, or locality becoming part of a new political entity. It could also encompass studies looking at forms of continuity and discontinuity in the knowledge that former and new administrators had of the local resources and their management.

3) **Connections between regional and local environmental transformations.**

This theme is open to various case-studies exploring the integration of local dynamics into broader regional trends. Between the two contrasting concepts of stability on the one hand and a thorough transformation on the other, a whole spectrum of possibilities and specificities can be delineated. Among others, how can we trace the spread of ecosystem management types, the diffusion of an agricultural technique or even the effect that transhumant herds had over the lands they crossed? Studies concerning sea and fresh-water fish, forest and grazing resources in particular could be examined here. These questions also prompt us to consider the understanding that historical actors had of possible uses of relevant natural resources and their limits. More generally, hypotheses and results linking different scales will be welcome, whether limited to the Adriatic, the Eastern Mediterranean, or including more distant connections.

The event will be organized by the **University of Ljubljana** and the study program **Gouverner les Îles: Territoires, ressources et savoirs des sociétés insulaires en Méditerranée**, in Slovenia, from **June 29<sup>th</sup>-to July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023**.

- It will include visits to Slovenian historical centers and archival fonds.
- Participants will be invited to present a 25-min paper including their study data, documents or conceptual frameworks. Summaries will be circulated in advance.
- Accommodation as well as food and excursion expenses will be provided for. Participants' institutions are expected to cover their travel costs to Slovenia.

Submissions, limited to **1000 words**, should be sent before **March 31<sup>th</sup>, 2023** to [pauleguena@hotmail.fr](mailto:pauleguena@hotmail.fr) and [ziga.zwitter@ff.uni-lj.si](mailto:ziga.zwitter@ff.uni-lj.si).

They should include: Name, surname, email address, university or current institution.

Applicants will be notified of the selection results by **April 21<sup>st</sup>**.

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