



Ινστιτούτο Ιστορικών Ερευνών • Εθνικό Ίδρυμα Ερευνών
Institute of Historical Research • National Hellenic Research Foundation



Conflict and the Environment in Modern Greece

September 21, 2020

Webinar workshop



The Institute of Historical Research (IHR) of the National Hellenic Research Foundation (NHRF) and the European Society for Environmental History (ESEH) are organizing an environmental history workshop which primarily focuses on conflict; armed or unarmed, open or undeclared. Conflict is closely linked to the environment as issues associated with the global ecology continue to spark protests and stir violence by the day. In this workshop, we aspire to delve into their historical preludes and follow their development in the immediate outskirts of global capitalism in southeastern Europe and, more specifically, Greece.

The environment as an apple of discord

The workshop will examine three distinct types of conflict. Firstly, the conflict generated *for* the acquisition or possession of certain environments, a topic commonly discussed in the international literature. Whether it concerns abundant fishing reserves, arable land, or the right to mine for precious metals, the exploitation of the earth's waning resources has been one of the main reasons that could lead two opposing sides to clash.

The environment as an antagonist

Secondly, we will examine the conflict that is directed *against* a given environment. This very often reflects an unspoken goal that stern modernists had set to mankind: the taming and subordination of everything that is considered wild, dangerous, unpredictable, and above all unproductive.

The environment as collateral damage

Finally, adhering to the rising justified concerns regarding the deterioration of local and global ecosystems, the workshop aspires to touch upon the detrimental effects of conflict to the environment. Ranging from contaminated lands rendered unsuitable for cultivation, to polluted rivers and withering forests, war and conflict have been very often the main reason contributing to the irrevocable collapse of natural coherence in territories that have been caught in the crossfire.

The focal point of the workshop will be Greece. Although the number of works on environmental history increase and cover a very wide geographical spectrum, with areas like sub-Saharan Africa or southern Asia being very often in the spotlight, southeastern Europe and the Balkans have not been the object of consistent research. This is something that we aspire to address by holding this workshop and this is also why we invited Prof. Marco Armiero, the current president of the European Society for Environmental History (ESEH) and acclaimed author and scholar, to deliver the keynote speech.

Furthermore -without excluding case-studies that emphasize on conclusions that are still relevant- this endeavor will be focused on modern history, setting its point of departure in, roughly, the 18th century. This choice was not arbitrary. Modernity holds a special place for environmental history as it is undoubtedly the age when the conflict for resources intensified and their extraction rate was sharply accelerated in comparison with the pre-modern era, as argued by John McNeill in his celebrated monograph *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World*.

Organizer:

George L. Vlachos, External Research Associate, IHR/NHRF, Regional Representative for Greece in the European Society for Environmental History

Scientific Advisory Committee:

Maria-Christina Chatziioannou (Director of IHR/NHRF)

Maria Leontsini (Senior Researcher, IHR/NHRF)

Workshop Program

Eastern European (GMT +3) time zone

10:20-10:30	Introduction and Greetings
10:30-11:15	<p>Keynote address: <i>“Green battlefields. Understanding the environment through the lens of conflicts.”</i></p> <p>Marco Armiero, Associate Professor, KTH; President of the European Society for Environmental History; Director of the Environmental Humanities Laboratory at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden</p>
11:15-11:40	<p><i>“The Research on the History of the Environment in the context of the Programs and Actions of the Institute for Historical Research (IIE): Challenges and Future Horizons.”</i></p> <p>Maria Leontsini, Senior Researcher, Institute of Historical Research/National Hellenic Research Foundation, Greece</p>
11:40-12:05	<p><i>“The Environment and Ottoman/Greek history and historiography: perspectives, limits and conflicts.”</i></p> <p>Elias Kolovos, Associate Professor, University of Crete; External collaborator, Independent Max Planck Research Group "Paleo-Science and History",</p>

2018-2023, Greece

12:05-12:30

“Old world vultures in a modern world. Conceptualizations, values and conservation challenges for carrion-eating birds.”

Kalliopi Stara, Laboratory of Ecology, Department of Biological Applications and Technology, University of Ioannina, Greece

Rigas Tsiakiris, Department of Forest Administration and Management, Forestry Service of Ioannina, Greece

12:30-12:45

Coffee Break

12:45-13:10

“Social and Hydraulic Engineering in the Interwar Balkans: The three land reclamations of southern Macedonia, 1913-1940.”

George L. Vlachos, Institute of Historical Research/ National Hellenic Research Foundation; European Society for Environmental History, Greece

13:10-13:25

“Soldiers in a foreign land: a visitor's perspective of the Peloponnese in the late 1820s.”

Katerina Gardikas, Department of History and Archaeology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

13:25-13:45

“Reappearances: new cobbled pathway in Artsista, Zagori; Notes from the field.”

Faidon Moudopoulos Athanasiou (corresponding author), Ph.D. candidate, University of Sheffield, Great Britain

Panagiotis Kostoulas, MSc in material science and technology, National Technical University of Athens, Greece

Grigoris Koutropoulos, MSc in cultural heritage management, University of Patras, Greece

Christophoros Theocharis, MSc building science and technology, Vienna University of Technology, Austria

Ionas Sklavounos, Ph.D. candidate, University of Antwerp, Belgium

13:45-14:10

“The Rivers of Rumeli: Towards a New Environmental History of the Ottoman Balkans.”

Aleksandar Shopov, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science; Regional Representative for North Macedonia in the European Society for Environmental History, Germany

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