Venice, a Mediterranean regional power.

Economic, maritime and political perspectives, 1669 – 1797

Seminar organized by the Centre de la Méditerranée Moderne et Contemporaine

Nice, September 24th-25th 2020

The Mediterranean has always been at the heart of Venice’s interests during the Early Modern Period. A main source of its prosperity, the Inner Sea maintained its vital role even after the “northern invasions”, the battle of Lepanto and the “downturn” of the 17th century.

This seminar aims to explore the relationship between Venice and the Mediterranean between the loss of Crete, the last major dominion of Venetian maritime empire in 1669, and the end of the Republic in 1797. Through the analysis of economic and commercial exchanges, naval activities and diplomatic/military relations of the Serenissima in the Mediterranean, we aim to discuss the dynamics of transformation and adjustment of the Republic’s new status as a regional power faced with the challenges of an Inner Sea crossed and populated by more powerful and richer competitors.

Recent historiography debated the role of “smaller states” in the Early Modern Period and their ability to take advantage of interstices left open by great powers or empires. This perspective of analysis seems perfectly suited for Venice during its last century of independence. In this regard, the loss of Crete after four centuries of domination involved a crucial downsizing in the Eastern Mediterranean and a further retreat from the Levant, the ancient core of Venetian economic and commercial interests.

Confined in a regional context stretching from Northern Italy to the Ionian islands, though, the Venetian Republic did not renounce to play an active role in the Mediterranean. This effort took the form of interlaced actions and measures within the economic-commercial field, in naval matters and in the military and diplomatic sphere.

We intend to adopt Economic-commercial, naval and maritime, and Political, diplomatic and military perspectives:

More specifically, we welcome papers on
- the role of the Venetian port and industrial system in the Mediterranean during this period;
- the transformation of Venetian trade networks after the loss of Crete and, more broadly, the peculiarities of Venetian maritime exchanges;
- the role of the Levant in the Venetian economy after 1669;
- growth opportunities for the Venetian trade and shipping during international wars;
- the economic relationship between Venice and western Mediterranean;
- market penetration opportunities in the West for Venetian products;
- the role of Stato da Mar and maritime communities within the Venetian State;
- the existence/ non-existence of a Venetian Mediterranean strategy from the XVII to the XVIII century.

Please mail your proposal in English, French or Italian by April 15th 2020 to: Pierre-Niccolo.SOFIA@univ-cotedazur.fr
Proposals shall include an abstract (150 words), specifying the sources used for the study, and a short bio (10 lines max) of the author.

The Scientific Committee will provide an answer by the end of April 2020.
A selection of the papers will be published.

Subsistence costs (one night hotel, a lunch and a dinner) shall be covered by the organizers.
Transport cost shall be borne by participants.

Organizer and Scientific Director

Pierre Niccolò Sofia (Centre de la Méditerranée Moderne et Contemporaine, Université Côte d’Azur)

Scientific Committee:

- Pierre Niccolò Sofia (Centre de la Méditerranée Moderne et Contemporaine, Université Côte d’Azur)
- Maria Fusaro (University of Exeter)
- Walter Panciera (Università degli Studi di Padova)