The archaeology of sharing practices

How change & continuity in mountain areas actually took place. Building new dialogues between environmental archaeology and rural history



Antigone and Kore International Conference

18th -21st January 2027
University of Genova

Call for papers and posters
Deadline 20th November 2026

CNR ISEM Istituto di Storia dell'Europa Mediterranea
Funded by the European Union
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MUR FARE RICERCA IN ITALIA
FRAMEWORK PER L'ATTRAZIONE E IL RAFFORZAMENTO DELLE ECCELLENZE PER LA RICERCA IN ITALIA

Call for papers for the international conference

"Archaeology of sharing practices: how change (and continuity) in mountain areas actually took place. Building new dialogues between environmental archaeology and rural history"
Genova, 18th–21st January 2027

The Laboratory of Environmental Archaeology and History at the University of Genova and the Institute for the History of Mediterranean Europe of the National Research Council (Cagliari headquarter) are pleased to invite you to the international conference: "*Archaeology of sharing practices: how change (and continuity) in mountain areas actually took place. Building new dialogues between environmental archaeology and rural history*", which will be held at the University of Genova from January 18th to 21st, 2027.

The event is the final conference of the Antigone Project "Archaeology of shariNg pracTIces: the material evidence of mountain marGinalisatiON in Europe (18th- 21st c. AD)", and the mid-term Congress of the Kore Project "Archaeology of dwelling: material evidence and seasonality of homing practices between settlements, spaces and resources in European uplands (16th-21st c. AD)". The conference aims to engage scholars of different disciplines - including archaeologists, historians, geographers, and naturalists, among others – interested in the reconstruction of historical dynamics and processes that led to the formation of rural and mountainous spaces. By providing a suitable setting to strengthen the dialogue between archaeologists and historians regarding population dynamics (both in Italy and across Europe), the conference also intends to highlight the role of archaeology in historical research on rural and mountainous areas, with a particular focus on modern and contemporary periods.

To submit a proposal for a presentation or a poster, please send an email to info.lasa@unige.it no later than **November 20th 2026.** The following information should be provided (template attached): a) title of the presentation, b) authors and their affiliations, c) abstract, d) an image illustrating the topic, e) language in which the presentation will be given (English, Italian, Spanish or French.), f) the chosen session. After the evaluation of the Scientific Committee, papers' acceptance will be communicated by **December 1st 2026**.

For papers presented in languages other than English, authors will be asked to send a long abstract in English (ca. 3 pages) by **January 10th 2027**, that will be printed in order to make possible for everybody to follow all presentations. In this case, the accompanying ppt will be in English. If the oral presentation will be delivered in English, the ppt may be in the native language.

Posters will be displayed during all the duration of the conference, and should be in English.

Sessions

I *Interdisciplinary insights for the characterization of environmental resource management practices and local naturalistic knowledge*

II *An interdisciplinary toolbox to explore the social dimension of practices: the relationship between environmental resource management practices and settlement dynamics*

III *The making of European mountains: environmental resources, commons, economic and exchange circuits*

IV *The social making of mountain landscapes: the relationship between seasonal and permanent settlements, and between seasonality and mobility*

V *Beyond "heritage science". A new role for archaeology in mountain areas: understanding the process of continuity in uses and inhabiting*

Round Table: *New contributions to policies for sustainable living mountains with their communities and landscapes*

For detailed description of each session, please write to info.lasa@unige.it, or visit (since the first week of November) the website antigone-erc.eu.

Conference introduction

Over the last 15 years, historical research in rural and mountainous areas — as well as the studies in environmental topics — has grown significantly across Europe. The recurrent conferences of environmental archaeology, rural archaeology, environmental history and rural history associations are a sign of this important increase. However, **there is still a lack of opportunities to compare different perspectives on the same subject or theme, and to foster a genuine interdisciplinary dialogue. Our conference aims to provide a forum for discussion for scholars who, approaching the topic from different disciplines and research perspectives, are engaged in the historical reconstruction of mountain spaces**.

In the European mountains, human settlement has historically taken the form of a dispersed pattern, closely linked to diverse methods of vertical resource exploitation — primarily the management of pastoral resources — as well as the local organization of movement and the existence of extensive common lands. Today, many of these areas are also protected for their natural value (as Sites of Community Importance or within Natural Parks). Through its Laboratory of Archaeology and Environmental History (lasa.unige.it), the University of Genova has long been engaged in research projects aimed at reaching an analytical understanding of the role that environmental resource management practices – and the ways in which these resources have been defined and structured – have historically played in historical processes of biodiversification and in the construction of rural landscapes and their environmental heritage. **In the last decade, research has focused on the relationship between practices and the dynamics of human settlement and tried to explore, from this point of view, the process of depopulation that, with differences in time, has generally affected European mountain regions since the end of the *Ancien Régime*.**

Drawing on a micro-analytical approach and an ecological-historical perspective, developed over 40 years of research and enriched over time by contributions from post-medieval archaeology and an increasingly intensive dialogue with socio-historical research, **LASA — through the Antigone** (antigone-erc.eu/**) and Kore projects — has tried to explore the relational dimension of practices for managing environmental resources** (primarily, though not exclusively, water, common pastures, and woodlands)**. The focus has been on practices to share environmental resources (sharing practices) and on the continuities and changes in how they are carried out.** The jurisdictional, environmental, and social implications of continuities changes have been carefully considered, paying attention to the tools employed to realise them. **We sought to examine whether — and to what extent — continuities and discontinuities in practices might shed light on the different dynamics of human settlement in the European mountains over the last three centuries**. Despite an overall demographic decline, there are significant local variations: some villages have maintained a relatively stable population, while others in the same parish or valley have experienced a definitive collapse.

This research has fostered periodic opportunities for scientific exchange across Europe, facilitating a dialogue between the theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches of archaeology, environmental archaeology, and social history. The conference in January aims to build upon these experiences, consolidate the University of Genova's position as a key reference point in European rural and environmental archaeology, and further strengthen an interdisciplinary discourse on topics related to rural and environmental history.

Through five sessions and a round table, this conference aims, on one hand, to stimulate discussion on topics particularly well-suited for theoretical and methodological inquiry — drawing on analyses that span different chronological periods (such as the management and sharing of environmental resources, processes of abandonment, claims of ownership and homing practices, etc.). **On the other hand, it seeks to provide a forum for those who, from various disciplinary perspectives, are studying how European mountain regions have evolved over the last three centuries** — examining, at the local scale, shifts and continuities in the organization of settlements, in the use of domestic practices, in practices and productive systems, in devotional rituals, and possession claiming, considering the social implication of changes as well as their connections to broader economic and exchange networks. **We aim to provide an occasion for comparison and discussion between case studies from across all European mountain regions**, providing the opportunity to explore potential explanations for the underlying internal and multifaceted mechanisms driving population dynamics at the local scale.

Each session will feature several presentations and be divided into sub-sessions, introduced by contributions from the advisory board and the participants in the projects that helped develop the conference's core themes. These introductory talks will provide a broad overview of the topics and issues addressed by the session. The concluding round table will explore potential applications of historical research, providing reflections on the dynamics of abandonment and maintenance of settlements and spaces, helping to define policies for the sustainable development of the European mountains (that is also to say in the conservation of their living rural heritage). The conference will end with an excursion to the site of the "Casoni del Chiappozzo" (Val Graveglia, Ne, Genova), where ongoing archaeological surveys and excavations of seasonal settlements are investigating the transformation in the productive system of the area (with the sedentarisation of animal husbandry since the late 17th c.), exploring also their role in the homing practices of the local social groups who used and inhabited them.

The conference is endorsed by numerous European and national associations dedicated to environmental and rural history and archaeology and is supported by funding from the University of Genova, its Department of Italian Studies, Romance Studies, Antiquities, Arts and Performing Arts, its School of Humanities, and by the European Research Council under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (ERC StG 2019 - GA No 853539) and from the Italian Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca Scientifica (FARE 2022 – R2034YSC59, CUP n. D33C21000240001).

Scientific committee: Anna Maria Stagno, Alessandro Panetta, Chiara Molinari, José Abellán Santisteban, José María Martín Civantos, Marco Milanese, Margarita Fernández Mier, Vittorio Tigrino, Nicki Whitehouse, Matteo Di Tullio, Giulia Beltrametti, Tomas Klir, Aleksander Panjek, Catarina Tente, Andrés Menéndez-Blanco.

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A research workshop on the topics of environmental archaeology planned for the 25th-26th of November 2026 will represent a first occasion of discussion.

For information, please write to info.lasa@unige.it