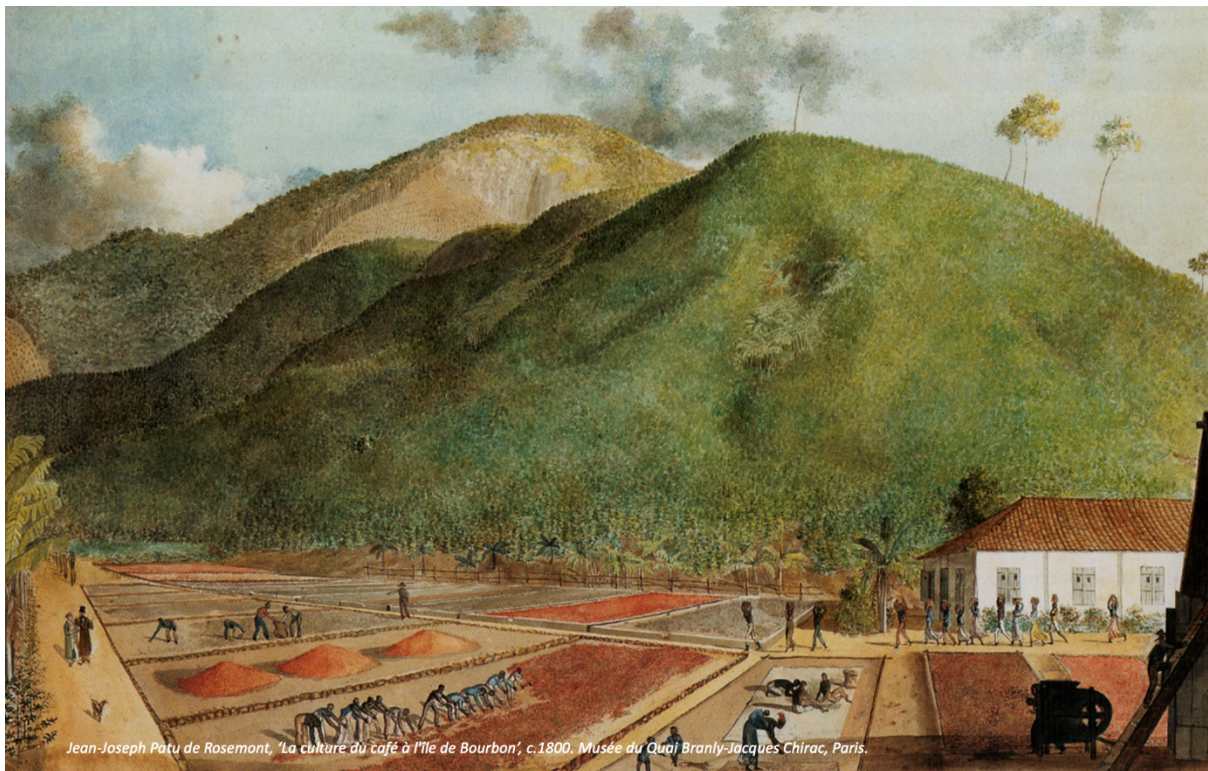


Commodities and Environments in Early Modern Global Asia 1400-1800

13-15 November 2024

European University Institute (Badia Fiesolana) and Biblioteca Riccardiana, Florence

Organisers: Guillemette Crouzet (EUI), Michael O'Sullivan (UNC Chapel Hill and EUI) and Giorgio Riello (EUI)



ABSTRACT

The international conference 'Commodities and Environments in Early Modern Global Asia, 1400–1800' is organized under the auspices of the European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Grant Project CAPASIA 'The Asian Origins of Global Capitalism', hosted at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy. The conference explores the relationship between environments and commodities in early modern Global Asia between 1400 and 1800. It investigates the environmental consequences in these regions of the extraction, production and trade in commodities.

This conference aims to integrate multiple historiographies which have sometimes operated in mutual isolation: **(i)** the literature on material culture and commodities in global history; **(ii)** the growing field of environmental history; and **(iii)** studies in the history of science which have examined how the natural sciences and ethnography served Europe's quest for trade, profit, and colonial domination.

This project receives funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation programme under the ERC grant agreement No 101054345

PROGRAMME

Wednesday 13 November 2024 – Sala del Capitolo, Badia Fiesolana, EUI (Via Roccettini 9, 50014 San Domenico di Fiesole)

13.30-14.15: Welcome coffee and opening remarks

Session 1. 14.15-15.45: Commodifying the Underworld. Chair: Mónica Bolufer (EUI)

1. Sander Molenaar (International Institute of Social History - IISH): 'Trading Lives for Pearls: The Commodification of Pearl Oysters in Guangdong, c. 1300-1600'
2. Robert I. Hellyer (Wake Forest University): 'Making Marine Products Export Commodities: Japan and its Neighbors, 1680-1800'
3. Zhen Yang (Trinity College Dublin): 'Mapping Environmental Impacts on the Uses of Marine Resources in East Asia, c. 1400-1800'

Session 2. 15:45-16.45: Environments and Finance. Chair: Glenda Sluga (EUI)

1. Maarten Draper (EUI) and Giorgio Riello (EUI): "Between Money and the Moon: The Relationship between the Trade in Cowrie shells and the Environment in the Early Modern Maldivian Islands"
2. Michael O'Sullivan (UNC Chapel Hill and EUI): 'The Environmental Economies of Smelting and Melting Precious Metals in Early Modern India, 1600-1800'

16:45-17:00: Break

Keynote One. 17.00-18.00. Chair: Guillemette Crouzet (EUI)

Jakobina Arch (Whitman College): 'More Than a Surface: Reflections on Oceans and/as Resources in the Early Modern World'

18.00-19.00: Reception, Sala Rossa (Badia Fiesolana)

Thursday 14 November 2024 – Badia Fiesolana, Sala del Capitolo

9.00-10.00: Keynote Two. Chair: Maxine Berg (The University of Warwick)

Sarah Easterby-Smith (University of Saint Andrews): 'Collecting for the Colonial State? Colonial Families and Amateur Natural History in the Western Indian Ocean, c. 1750-1800'

10.00-10.30: Coffee break

Session 3. 10.30-12.20: Commodity Extraction and Environmental Sustainability. Chair: Renata Cabral Bernabé (EUI)

1. Chechesh Kudachinova (Free University Berlin): "'Everything That Sable Pelts Were Not": Extracting Walrus Ivory in Seventeenth-century Northeast Asia'
2. Ronan Bouttier (Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne): 'The French Empire and the Timber Trade in the Indian Ocean, Late Seventeenth to the Early Nineteenth Century'
3. Manorama Akung (University of Mauritius): 'The Commodification of the Mauritian Landscape, 1600-1800'
4. Guillemette Crouzet (EUI): 'The Malavois Decree: Environment and Sustainability in the Late Eighteenth-century Seychelles'

12:20-13:45: Lunch (Mensa, Badia Fiesolana)

Session 4. 13:45-16:15: Colonial Crops and Subaltern Resistance. Chair: Maarten Draper (EUI)

1. Matthew Thomas Wormer (University of Massachusetts): 'Peasant Horticulture, Subaltern Resistance, and the Role of Colonial Science in the Bengal Opium Trade, c. 1770-1820'
2. Kathleen Burke (National University of Singapore): 'Commodifying Cacao in Eastern Indonesia'
3. Noelle Richardson (Leiden University) and Philipp Huber (International Institute for Social History - IISH): 'The Expansion of Sugar Plantations in Early Modern Java, c. 1740-1780'

16:15-16:45: Coffee break

Session 5. 16:45-17:45: Agronomy and the Political Economy of Transplants. Chair: M'Hamed Oualdi (EUI)

1. Giulio Talini (Scuola Superiore Meridionale, Naples): 'From the Indian Ocean to the Caribbean: Political Economy, Agronomy, and Transplanting in the French Empire'
2. Renata Cabral Bernabe (EUI) and Giorgio Riello (EUI): 'A Belated Plan? The Transplantation of Asian Crops to Brazil: The Case of Cinnamon'

Keynote Three. 17:45-18:45. Chair: Tirthankar Roy (LSE)

Sujit Sivasundaram (Cambridge University): 'The Human and the Ocean at the Centre of the World'

Friday 15 November 2024 – Biblioteca Riccardiana (Via de' Ginori 10, Florence)

Session 6. 9.00-10.00: Commodities and Urban Ecologies. Chair: Alexia Yates (EUI)

1. Luc Bulten (Cambridge University): 'The Alongshore City: Early Modern Colombo and the Creation of a Global South Hub, 1550-1820'
2. Queenie Lin (Delft University of Technology): 'Brick by Brick: Building the Resilient Dutch Overseas Settlements in VOC Asia'

10.00-10:45: Opening of the Exhibition 'Commodities and Environments: Florence and the Indo Atlantic Worlds, 1500-1800'

10:45-11:15: Coffee break at Café 'La Ménagère' near the Biblioteca Riccardiana

Session 7. 11.15-12.15: Peasants, Animals and the Commodification of Environments. Chair: Jagjeet Lally (University College London)

1. Masayuki Tanimoto (University of Tokyo): 'From the Land to the Sea: The Environmental and Imperial Consequences of New Fertilizer to Peasant Society in Early Modern Japan'
2. Guanmian Xu (Peking University): 'Buffalo Regimes: Animal Labour on Asia's Sugar Frontiers, 1630-1800'

Keynote Four. 12.15-13.15. Chair: Corinna Unger (EUI)

Anne Gerritsen (Warwick University): 'Environment and Non-commodification: Failed Ventures in Rhubarb's Transplant History'