



FRONTIERS OF HUMANITY AND BEYOND

TOWARDS NEW CRITICAL
UNDERSTANDINGS OF BORDERS

P10 - EARLY ANTHROPOCENE: EXPLOITATION AND EXTINCTION IN THE SEAS

ORGANISERS

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ABSTRACT

The Anthropocene as a geological era is under avid debate within different fields of the natural and social sciences and the humanities - its beginning being the Neolithic Revolution or the 20th-century Great Acceleration. We will discuss a premodern Anthropocene, from the late 15th century onwards, marked by the European expansions. The early modern Europeans' expansion is closely related to the so-called first globalization; geo-political, economic and cultural globalization as much as ecological globalization. These were supported on the development of extra-European colonial territories, new regional and imperial trading networks, and on the exploitation of and consequent transformations and impacts on ecosystems. Extractions of sea life led to habitat degradation and long term negative impacts on marine ecosystems, leading populations and species to the brink of extinction. Cod, sharks, marine turtles, whales, seals, sea cows, coral, seashells, ambergris, were appropriated, handled, and transformed into commodities shipped worldwide.

The Humanities are now being called to acknowledge the ecological and material foundations of cultures and societies, its energy sources and forms of biological coexistence, and the interdependency of humankind and the non-human world.

We invite scholars - maritime, environmental, art and science historians; archaeologists, zooarchaeologists, geographers, historical ecologists, among others - to address and discuss the construction of knowledge, technology and science; perceptions and representations of maritime communities and marine populations; convergent or divergent ways of exploitation of the ocean, transformation processes, uses and patterns of trade and consumption. Analysing trends at local and global levels, will allow to assess dynamics and impacts in marine ecosystems in the long durée. Crossing different scientific fields will shorten the frontiers within academia and those between people and the rest of nature.

Nina Vieira has a PhD in History, a Master in Marine Ecology and a Bachelor degree in Biology. Her PhD thesis was focused on "The taxonomy of Portuguese whaling from the 15th to the 18th century: An Atlantic history of the sea, whales and people" at NOVA FCSH. She is involved in national and international research projects concerning ecology and history of marine mammals, such as two bilateral funds of EEA Grants and a MSCA-RISE projects. She is also a team member of the UNESCO Chair "The Ocean's Cultural Heritage".

Cristina Brito is Assistant Professor at the History Department at NOVA FCSH, Lisbon, and the Director of CHAM - Centre for the Humanities. She has secured a 2020 ERC Synergy Grant as co-PI with the project 4-OCEANS: human history of marine life. She holds a PhD in History of the Portuguese Expansion, a Masters in Ethology and a Bachelor degree in Biology. She has an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach to her research. Her scientific interests include early modern marine environmental history, local and global perceptions about and uses of the seas, Atlantic and oceanic histories. She is also a member of the Board of OPI – Oceans Past Initiative, and a member of several networks and research projects, within the line of research Environmental History and the Sea at CHAM: UNESCO Chair on Oceans' Cultural Heritage; H2020 RISE project CONCHA; Marine lexicon and H-WHALE through EEA Grants Bilateral Funding.