Asiac
XVII Annual Conference

Rome,
Sapienza University
14-15-16 December 2023

Sapienza University of Rome
Department of Political Sciences
Piazzale Aldo Moro no.5 - 00185 Rome.

In collaboration with
The annual conference of the Association for the Study in Italy of Central Asia and the Caucasus (Asiac), now in its 17th edition, aims to foster the scientific dialogue between scholars working on these areas, from Italy as well as from abroad. This year, the conference will host a special section dedicated to the topic of “Humans and the Environment in Eurasia”, in which contributors explore the role of the environment in Eurasian societies through the lenses of history, linguistics, sociology, politics, literature, art, or area studies.

The XVII ASIAC Annual Conference is organised by the Association's board of directors (Aldo Ferrari, Carlo Frappi, Frank Maracchione, Gabriele Natalizia, Giorgio Comai, Giulia Sciorati, Elisabetta Ragagnin, Velizar Sadovski, Anna Sirinian) in cooperation with Andrea Carteny, Sapienza University of Rome.

The conference is realized in cooperation with the Department of Political Sciences of Sapienza University of Rome, The International Association for Mediterranean and Oriental Studies (ISMEO), the Observatory on Central Asia and the Caspian, and with the support of Geopolitica.info.
DAY 1 - 14 December 2023

8:30 - 9:00  Registration
“Sala Lauree”, ground floor, Political Sciences Department, Sapienza University

9:00 - 9:30  Openings and welcoming addresses
“Sala Lauree”, ground floor, Political Sciences Department, Sapienza University

Aldo FERRARI, ASIAC and Ca’ Foscari University of Venice
Maria Cristina MARCHETTI, Sapienza University of Rome
Adriano ROSSI, ISMEO
Antonello BIAGINI, Sapienza University of Rome
Luca MICHELETTA, Sapienza University of Rome
Michelguglielmo TORRI, Asia Maior

9:30 - 11:00  Knowledge, power, society and the environment in Central Asia’s Soviet and Post-Soviet Irrigated Agriculture

Special Section “Humans and the Environment”
Chair: Riccardo M. CUCIOLLA, University of Naples L’Orientale
Room: “Sala Lauree”, ground floor, Political Sciences Department, Sapienza University

The Cotton Disease. The White Gold Monoculture in Soviet Uzbekistan and its Implications
Riccardo M. CUCIOLLA, University of Naples L’Orientale

Slow Violence and Silent Dissent After State Withdrawal and War: Soil Salinisation and the Agrarian Order in Southwest Tajikistan
Irna HOFMAN, University of Oxford

Flora ROBERTS, Utrecht University

Shifting Knowledge Practices about Soil Salinization in Southern Kazakhstan
Tommaso TREVISANI, University of Naples L’Orientale
11:20 - 13:00  Humans and the Environment in contemporary Central Asia

Special Section “Humans and the Environment” (II)
Chair: Stefano RAVAGNAN, OACC
Room: "Sala Lauree", ground floor, Political Sciences Department, Sapienza University

Kazakhstan’s Modern Nuclear and Environmental Considerations
Nicole ANSELMO, University of Oxford

The Environmental Approach in Uzbekistan, with Particular Regard to Italian Cooperation
Alessandro CARILE, University of Trieste

Pastoralism in Contemporary Kazakhstan: Property Relations and Inequality
Roger CREUS VILA, University of Oxford

The Priorities of Sustainable Development of al-Farabi KAZNU: Green University, Green Office, Green Campus
Galiya IBRAYEVA, al Farabi Kazakh National University

Implementing Sustainable Development Policies in Developing Countries: From One-Size-Fits-All Approaches to SDGS in Central Asia
Serik ORAZGALIYEV, Nazarbayev University

13:00 - 14:30  Lunch break

14:30 - 16:00  (A) Names and Stories

Chair: Lorenzo PUBBLICI, University of Naples L’Orientale
Room: Hall no.8, 3rd floor, Political Sciences Department, Sapienza University

The Names of the Jews and Jewish Names in Georgia
Tamari LOMTADZE, Tbilisi State University
Tsira JANJGAVA, Tbilisi State University
Manana MIKADZE, Akaki Tsereteli State University
Soslan and the Balsæg’s wheel
Paolo OGNIBENE, University of Bologna

Changing Environmentalism and Social Critique in the Works of Chingiz Aitmatov
Paul WOODS, Asia Graduate School of Theology – Alliance
**14:30 - 16:00 (B) Conflict, crises and wars**

Chair: Dina SHARIPOVA, Nazarbayev University, Astana
Room: Study room no.2, 2nd floor, Political Sciences Department, Sapienza University

*The implications of the war in Ukraine in the Caucasus region: towards a new balance of power*
Giorgio CELLA, University of Calabria

*Azerbaijan Amid the Ukrainian Crisis: Perceptions, Implications and Expectations*
Fidan NAMAZOVA, ADA University, Baku

*Human Rights situation in Tajikistan’s Gorno-Badakhshan autonomous region*
Steve SWERDLOW, University of Southern California

*An alternative view on Kazakhstan’s modern history*
Fabrizio VIELMINI, Webster University

**16.00 - 16.30 Coffee break**

**16.30 - 18.00 (A) Diasporas**

Chair: Aldo FERRARI, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice
Room: Hall no.8, 3rd floor, Political Sciences Department, Sapienza University

*How Many and Where? Data and Avenues of Research on the Caucasian Diaspora in Late Ottoman and Early Republican Turkey*
Fabio L. GRASSI, Sapienza University of Rome

*We Are Not Diaspora: Identity Negotiation Among Uzbeks in Sairam District*
Intizor M. SAIDIKARIMOVA, Nazarbayev University
16:30 - 18:00 (B) China in Central Asia

Chair: Jasmin DALL’AGNOLA, George Washington University
Room: Study room no.2, 2nd floor, Political Sciences Department, Sapienza University

The Interplay of Russian and Chinese (Self)Perceptions in Kyrgyzstan
Sara BERLOTO, University of Milan
Nicolò FASOLA, University of Bologna

A Self-interested Economic Provider? Research on Central Asia in the People’s Republic of China
Frank MARACCHIONE, University of Sheffield
Bradley JARDINE, Oxus Society for Central Asian Affairs and Wilson Center

China’s multiple multilateral initiatives in Central Asia – a critical assessment
Elzbieta M. PRON, University of Silesia in Katowice

Environmental Risks in the Implementation of Belt and Road Initiative: Case of Kazakh-Chinese Joint Manufacturing Enterprises
Azhar SERIKKALIYEVA, Almaty Management University

Health Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics: Tracing Discourses on Cooperation with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan during COVID-19
Giulia SCIORATI, London School of Economics and Political Sciences

18.00 - 19.00 ASIAC General Assembly (in Italian)
Hall no.8, 3rd floor, Political Sciences Department, Sapienza University
DAY 2 - 15 December 2023

9:30 - 11:30  Baku’s Evolving Place in Azerbaijani Social Life: Urbanity, Wealth, and Societal Identities Since World War Two

Chair: Tsyyplma DARIEVA, Centre for East European and International Studies (ZOiS) Berlin
Room: Study room no.2, 2nd floor, Political Sciences Department, Sapienza University

Transforming Landscapes: The Azerbaijani Middle Class and the Politics of Change
Cristina BOBOC, Ghent University
Finding a Place in Post-War Baku: Social and Cultural Challenges of Integration for Baku’s Migrants from the Village in the 1940s to early 1950s
Heather D. DEHAAN, Binghamton University
Leaving Home for a Better Future: The Environment and Rural-Urban Migration in Azerbaijan (late 1940s-1950s)
Shalala MAMMADOVA, Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University
Making Black City White: Oil, Wealth, and Spatial Inequalities in Baku, Azerbaijan
Leyla SAYFUTDINOVA, University of St. Andrews

11:30 - 13:00  Studying China in Central Asia – roundtable

Chairs: Frank MARACCHIONE, University of Sheffield
Giulia SCIORATI, London School of Economics and Political Sciences
Room: Study room no.2, 2nd floor, Political Sciences Department, Sapienza University

Participants
Jasmin DALL’AGNOLA, George Washington University
Irna HOFMAN, University of Oxford
Frank MARACCHIONE, University of Sheffield
Elzbieta PRON, University of Silesia in Katowice
Giulia SCIORATI, London School of Economics and Political Sciences
Eva SEIWERT, Friedrich-Alexander Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg
David TOBIN, University of Sheffield
Azhar SERIKKALIEVA, Almaty Management University

13:00 - 14:30 Lunch break
14:30 - 16:00  Addressing the formal-informal dichotomy in the study of Central Asia: between access to resources and distribution networks

Chair: Madina GAZIEVA, Dublin City University
Room: Study room no.2, 2nd floor, Political Sciences Department, Sapienza University

Giulio BENEDETTI, Stockholm School of Economics and Maastricht University
The Role of Labor Intermediaries in the Migration Corridor from Central Asia to the EU

Alberica CAMERANI, Dublin City University
“The Role of the Socio-Cultural Context in Shaping Female Entrepreneurship: Insights from Kyrgyzstan”

Madina GAZIEVA, Dublin City University
“They Self-Provision for Subsistence” – Livelihoods and Water Access Dynamics among Smallholders in Rural Uzbekistan

Eugenia PESCI, University of Helsinki
Navigating the Bazaar: Women’s Experiences of Informal Work in Uzbekistan

Binazir YUSUPOVA, Dublin City University

16:30 - 17:30  The Black Sea area: Identities and Security in the aftermath of the war in Ukraine

Chairs: Andrea CARTENY, Sapienza University
Study room no.2, 2nd floor, Political Sciences Department, Sapienza University

Carlo FRAPPI, Ca’ Foscari University
Giuseppe MOTTA, Sapienza University
Gabriele NATALIZIA, Sapienza University
Nicolò RASCAGLIA, Sapienza University
Alessandra RUSSO, University of Trento
17:30 - 18:00 Pan-Nationalism in Eurasia: The Myth of Turan – Book Presentation

Chairs: Fabio L. GRASSI, Sapienza University of Rome
Study room no.2, 2nd floor, Political Sciences Department, Sapienza University of Rome

Participants:
Davor ANTONUCCI, Sapienza University of Rome
Fulvio BERTUCCelli, Sapienza University of Rome
Paolo PIZZOLO, Sapienza University of Rome

DAY 3 - 16 December 2023

9:15 - 11:00 (A) Conflict and Security in the South Caucasus

Chair: Carlo FRAPPI, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice
Room: Hall C, ground floor, Political Sciences Department, Sapienza University of Rome

Escaping an Ideology and Resisting its Affective Discipling: The Case of the No-War Movements in Azerbaijan
Cesare FIGARI BARBERIS, Graduate Institute of Geneva
Railroad to Peace? Implications of Opening the Yeraskh-Julfa-Meghri-Horadiz Railine between Armenia and Azerbaijan
Mahammad MAMMADOV, Topchubashov Center, Baku
Caucasus and the first Karabakh conflict in Giulio Andreotti’s archives
Daniel POMMIER VINCELLI, Sapienza University of Rome
Managing Security in the Caucasus: Repercussions and Motives of Regional and Global Players in the Karabakh Conflict
Simona SCOTTI, Independent Researcher
Ontological Security, Collective Memory, and Narratives: Rethinking Russian–Armenian Relations throughout the Nagorno–Karabakh Conflict
Leonardo ZANATTA, Corvinus University of Budapest
9:15 - 11:00 (B) Economic diversification

Chair: Frank MARACCHIONE, University of Sheffield
Room: Hall D, ground floor, Political Sciences Department, Sapienza University

Connectivity between Landlocked Central Asian States to Land Linked Pakistan through Chinese Led Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)
Javaid FAISAL, Federal Urdu University
Michael SPIES, Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development,
Muhammad F. SYED, Federal Urdu University

External resources, professionalization and accountability: Exploring self-regulatory practices in Georgian civil society
Najmin KAMILSOY, Charles University

The State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan (SOFAZ) in the Post-Oil Era: Will the “Wallet” Survive?
Teymur KHALAFOV, University of Glasgow

Structural Transformation through a Multi-Vector Geo-Economic Governance? BRI and Upgrading(s) of the Uzbek Gas Industry
Lorena LOMBARDOZZI, The Open University

Achieving Sustainable Development Goals within the Eurasian region
Aleksandra KHRAMOVA, Eurasian Economic Commission

11:00 - 11:20 Coffee break

11:20 - 13:00 (A) Memory, Modernity and Historical Legacy

Chair: Velizar SADOVSKI, Austrian Academy of Sciences
Room: Hall C, ground floor, Political Sciences Department, Sapienza University

Central Asian progressive thinker of the end of the 19th century: analysis of Ahmad Donish’s intellectual legacy
Kamila AKHMEDJANOVA, University of Oxford

Brothers beyond the Curtain: Representations of “Captive” Turkic Peoples in Right-Wing Press during the Cold War
Fulvio BERTUCCELLI, Sapienza University and University of Bologna

The Legacies of Environmental Colonialism in Post-Soviet Central Asian Culture
Tamar KOPLATADZE, University of Oxford

Memory Activism and the KGB Archive Documents: Crafting Gulag Truths in Tbilisi, Georgia
Laura MAFIZZOLI, University of Manchester
11:20 - 13:00 (B) Space and socio-political dynamics [hybrid]

Chair: Alessandra RUSSO, University of Trento
Room: Hall D, ground floor, Political Sciences Department, Sapienza University

Urban By Default? Exploring Almaty & Astana’s Development as Cases of Kazakhstan’s Political Development
Arina DMITRENKO, University of Toronto
The Power of Water: Exploring Infrastructural Projects and Socio-Political Dynamics in Central Asia
Eugenia FABBRI, University of Bologna
Urban Space in Contemporary Armenia: Between Private, Public, and No One’s
Maria GUNKO, University of Oxford
Crowded and aggrieved: Housing crisis, acculturation gap and psychological distress between two
generations in Kazakhstan
Sarhat PETROSYAN, urbanlab

15:30 – 17:30 Continuities and Discontinuities in Central Asia and the Caucasus.
A Visual Approach to the Human Landscape – Special session

Chair: Aldo FERRARI, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice
Adriano ROSSI, ISMEO
Venue: National Central Library of Rome, Viale Castro Pretorio no.105, Rome
Room: Hall 1-2

Central Asian Leniniana: Textual Iconographies of Vladimir Il’ič Lenin in Soviet Tajikistan
Stefano PELLO’, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice
The project OSCOP. Observing South Caucasus’ Historical Landscape: An Open Photo Archive
Stefano RICCIONI, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice and Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz
The conference will be held at Political Sciences Department of Sapienza University of Rome. Sapienza's Campus main entrance, in Piazzale Aldo Moro, is located approximately 1,500 meters away from Rome "Termini" central station. The Campus is easily reachable by Metro, being approximately 500 meters away from metro stops "Castro Pretorio" and "Policlinico" (Metro B). The political Sciences building (CU002) is marked in the University City map below.

The special session on Saturday afternoon will be held at the the National Central Library of Rome, located in Viale Castro Pretorio no.105 (at the Metro B "Castro Pretorio" stop, and walking distance from Sapienza's Campus)