UNIVERSITA DEGLI STUDI DI TORINO

CULTURE POLITICA SOCIETÀ

International Conference

# Italy and the Suez Canal. A global history, from the mid-19th century to the present

**Turin, 23-24 May 2019**

Call for Papers

As it approaches its 150th anniversary (it was opened to navigation in 1869), and with a recent expansion doubling its capacity, the Suez Canal is receiving renewed media and historiographical interest. Innovative perspectives from global, imperial and maritime history, and from wide-ranging studies on the Mediterranean and the Middle East, have stimulated original research paths on the Canal's history. Meanwhile international business, labor and social history has been shedding new light on the experience of the *Compagnie internationale du canal maritime de Suez* and its relationship with modern Egypt. These approaches have introduced new actors, topics and periodization, thus contributing to integrate and revise traditional —if not stereotyped or even mythical— narratives on the Canal.

No comprehensive account exists of the long, rich and multifaceted relationship between Italy and the Canal. The Italian side of the Canal's story has been the object of fragmentary studies and is usually ignored by international historiography, despite Italy's fundamental technical, labor, diplomatic and financial contribution to the construction of the Canal and to its subsequent development (e.g. up to the 1930s Italians represented the second largest national group of the Company's workforce). Moreover, Italian communities on the isthmus were affected in many ways by the role and use of the Canal in peace and war (as during the liberal era, fascism, the two world wars, the Ethiopian war, the cold war, the 1956 crisis and post-1956 events), while Italian investment, trade, banking and maritime interests have been revolving in many ways around the Canal's activities, from its origin to the present doubled "new Suez Canal".

The Conference aims to overcome the fragmentary nature of existing studies on Italy and the Canal, and to propose innovative research and materials, which might improve our understanding of different moments and episodes of Italian history, of

Italy's role and presence in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, and of the globalization of the Italian economy, as seen from the perspective of the Canal.
We welcome contributions based on original research that may somehow intersect both the Canal's and Italian history, in different periods, from the mid-19th century to the present, particularly —though not exclusively— on the following subjects:

History of historiography
Biography
Non-governmental actors and international organizations
Cultural history, representations and discourses on modernity
Religious and linguistic encounters
Citizenship
Gender
Labor and professional migration
Infrastructure, ports, networks of transport and communication
Banking, investment and trade
Oil and other commodities
War passages, strategic and military aspects
Colonial connections
International and maritime law and legal governance
Health and medicine
Tourism
Ecology and the environment

Proposals (400-500 words, in English) and a short cv with main publications (max 300 words) should be sent to barbara.curli@unito.it by **30 October 2018**.
Participants will be notified by late November and will be expected to hand in a foot-noted draft paper (6000 words) by 30 March 2019.

Languages of the Conference: Italian, English, French

The organization will take charge of accommodation and meals in Turin.

Scientific Committee: Nir Arielli (University of Leeds), Sven Beckert (Harvard University), Francesca Biancani (University of Bologna-CEDEJ/IFAO Cairo), Hubert Bonin (University of Bordeaux), Barbara Curli (University of Turin), Abdel Aziz Ezz El Arab (AUC Cairo), Pascal Griset (University of Paris Sorbonne-CNRS), Maurizio Isabella (University of London), Nicola Labanca (University of Siena), Lucy Riall (EUI Florence), Elisabetta Tonizzi (University of Genoa)