



KIEL CONFERENCE

8-12 March 2027

Social, Environmental, and Cultural Connectivity in Past Societies IX

Call for Papers

Submission Deadline: 15.10.2026

Visit www.kielconference.uni-kiel.de to submit your abstracts!

Session 32: Living Sandscapes – Experience, Land Use, and Environmental Change

Sandscapes: environments dominated by wind-blown sand are highly dynamic and often challenging to exploit, offering unique experiences for past societies and researchers exploring them. Aeolian processes and landforms are sensitive to environmental change and land-use strategies, which makes their study highly relevant in an era of accelerating transformation. Sandscapes occur across a wide range of climatic zones. Examples include the North Sea littoral, where medieval villages were abandoned after sand inundations; the Mediterranean coast of the Southern Levant with its sophisticated Early Islamic Plot-and-Berm agroecosystems; Southwestern Africa, where dunes offer exceptional preservation conditions for prehistoric sites, and Brazil, where dunes encroached upon churches and houses in the 20th century. Throughout the world and throughout history, attempts to control the dunes have involved hard human and animal labour.

Sandscapes lend themselves not only to studies of human–environment interactions, but also to post-processual approaches that conceptualise landscapes as socially constructed and bodily experienced. In Northwestern Europe, for example, mobilized coastal dunes were associated with divine intervention and superstition and formed part of spiritual experiences and religious practices. Similar perspectives can be found elsewhere in the world. In Pueblo oral traditions, Sip'ophe ("Sandy Place Lake") by the Great Sand Dunes in Colorado is the place where the people emerged from the underworld. Meanwhile, the dune landscapes of Australia's Western Desert are embedded in Aboriginal cosmologies and are said to be traversed by the tracks of ancestral beings.

The purpose of this session is to encourage transdisciplinary discussion on the relationship

between human and aeolian environments over time, considering sandscapes as constructed, perceived and experienced places. We invite scholars from fields such as geoarchaeology, landscape archaeology, environmental history, cultural geography and environmental humanities. Contributions may address any period or region and may take the form of theoretical reflections, methodological discussions, or empirical case studies.

Conveners: *Raphael Kahlenberg*¹, *Joel Roskin*², *Joana Gaspar de Freitas*³

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The presentations are scheduled for 15 minutes plus 5 minutes of discussion.

Poster presentations are also possible. Abstracts are limited to 2,500 characters (incl. spaces) and may include up to 5 references.

Abstracts can only be submitted via the conference website:

www.kielconference.uni-kiel.de

from 1st August to 15th October 2026.

The review-period is until 15th November 2026.

Registration for the conference will be possible from November onwards.

We are looking forward to your contributions!

On behalf of the ROOTS speakers,
Martin Furholt

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Venue:
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