**Thematic session 3**

***Early Modern Mediterranean Captivity: Conflicts, Interactions and Repercussions***

**Organiser: Tobias Auböck**, University of Innsbruck, Austria

**Chair: Tobias Auböck**

The workshop investigates captivity in the Mediterranean from the late medieval to the early modern period in order to look at the various diplomatic, literary, cultural and historical manifestations of these stories of conflict and contact. The phenomenon of Mediterranean captivity was closely connected to the demand of labour in the countries involved. In the Christian as well as in the Islamic world, captives were used as workforce, in the building of harbours, palaces, and fortifications, and also as galley slaves. Others were employed as servants in distinguished households. Many captives, however, were held for ransom or were exchanged for captives in other countries, which introduced new dynamics and ways of interactions to the conflict. The distinction into “free” and “unfree” labour is difficult in this case, as former captives could work in servility even after their release. At the same time, they had ways to negotiate their own status even while in captivity (depending on, among other factors, their language skills). Also their former social status affected their conditions in captivity. Consequently, the use of highly charged terms such as “slave” and “captive” is heatedly discussed in this field and will also be touched upon in the course of the proposed session.