Special issue in Quaternary International:
Geoarchaeology between Mediterranean areas and arid margins

The Mediterranean, semi-arid and arid environments share a strong rainfall variability, rare or poorly distributed surface flows and very reactive geosystems to climatic or anthropogenic forcings. The drought, common to these areas, may have a significant impact on the availability of water resources. In another hand, high-energy fluvial systems, characterized by flash floods, led to the mobility of floodplains and coastal plains. The combination of those parameters, and their evolution over time, might have had a strong impact on the archaeological sites distribution, sites preservation, land use and land management.

Geoarchaeology allows studying these past interactions between human groups and their environment on several timescales (from the Quaternary to historical times) as well as spatial scales (from the regional scale to the microscopic scale). Despite different local and regional contexts, the large geographic area proposed for this special issue dedicated to geoarchaeology should allow a comparison of different prehistoric, historical, and environmental contexts, to better understand how human-environment interactions may have shaped landscapes, land use and settlement strategies.

The topic of the special issue will emphasize three themes:

— Evolution of water resources and settlement patterns in marginal environments: The discussion might debate to what extent geoarchaeology permits the study of hydrological constraints and human responses. How hydrological constraints can be qualified or quantified (or not) according to each archive or each human group/society? How quickly social adjustments occurred after a hydrological crisis? Can we still talk about a response when social adjustments took centuries/millennium to be effective?

—The fragile balance of past geosystems: as Mediterranean/arid areas are very responsive to climatic fluctuations and anthropogenic activities; we would like to highlight results that can qualify or quantify past threshold effects preceding visible evolution of a geosystem. These papers might try to define the different components of the studied geosystem and highlight the causal chain that generates the most visible changes in the landscape or resources. Attempts of disentangling anthropogenic and climatic influences are welcome.

—Doing geoarchaeology from the Mediterranean to arid areas: a taphonomic challenge: We would like to emphasize methodologies that can help to cope with disparate and discontinuous data. Suggestions for protocols are welcome. Papers presenting effective strategies/methodology in a specific environment (like sabkha, salt dome, gullies, etc.) are also welcomed if they offer a useful synthesis for colleagues working in similar environments.

This special issue is a great opportunity for presenting and promoting new fieldwork, tools and methodologies in geoarchaeology to an international audience.

Proposals (abstracts of 500 words) might be submitted to the guest editors until the 20/11/2019.

Tara Beuzen-Waller: tara.beuzen@gmail.com; Stéphane Desruelles: stephane.desruelles@sorbonne-universite.fr; Adrian G. Parker: agparker@brookes.ac.uk

You are welcome to contact us concerning any inquiries about this issue.