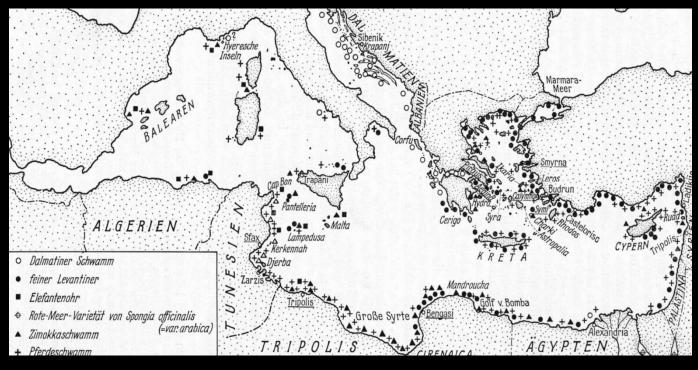
# Spatial and temporal adaptations of a traditional Mediterranean fishery facing Regional Change: combining history and ecology to study past, present and future of sponge harvesting



# Past, present and future of sponge fishery

- Case study
- Good model of traditional fishery that has suffered numerous upheavals during the last three centuries
- High cultural heritage all around the Mediterranean Sea



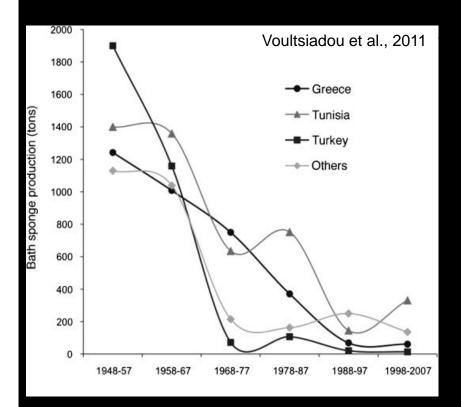


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- Change of use:
   navigation means
   (sails / engines, boat
   size), fishing gear
   (skin diving, hard
   head diving, scuba diving, gangave)
- Environmental changes including climatic
- Geopolitical context

### **Context**



3. A regain of commercial interest for the product with new markets such as cosmetics, luxury market

# 1. Sponge fishing is a traditional activity that has suffered numerous upheavals during the last three centuries

Population movements

New fishing technics always more efficient

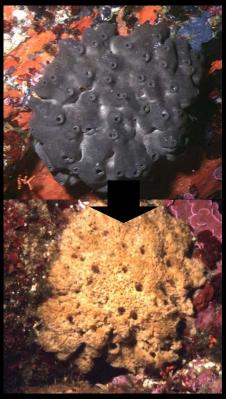
#### 2. Dramatic decline of the harvesting

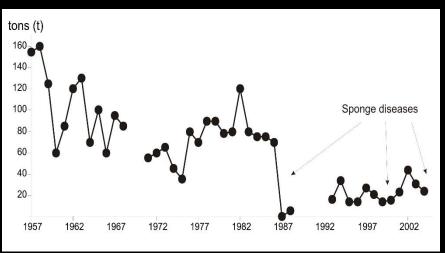
Depletion of stocks?
Due to a decline of fishermen?
An unprofitable activity?



## **Context**

- 4. The geopolitical context around the Mediterranean is very instable
- 5. Mediterranean's natural resources undergo great environmental changes; targets of these fisheries suffer from:
  - Changes in thermal regimes
  - Increasing occurrence of disease outbreaks during the last century (30's, 1985-86, 1999-2000, 2007) (e.g. Pérez and Vacelet 2014, Voultsiadou et al., 2011)
  - Pollution





Tunisian catches

#### **Questions**







- What were the reasons of sponge fishermen migration?
  - Local depletion of the resource? To find new production areas?
  - o Geopolitical context? Find better life conditions?
- What were the consequences of the changes in use ?
  - Better distribution of the fishing effort? Increase in fishing pressure?
  - o Indebtedness or enrichment of the fishermen?
- How did/do fishermen adapt to environmental changes?
  - o Did/do the fishermen look for new harvesting areas?
  - o Change in fishing practice / effort / fishing area?
  - Adaptation of fishermen / Shift towards other target species? What consequences on these species?
- > What is the resilience capability of the natural resources?
- In the actual context can we predict the evolution of this fishery?
- Can this fishery go towards an eco-durable practice?

# **Proposed methods**

- Build historical maps at different scales (local to Mediterranean) of the sponge production between the XVIII<sup>th</sup> and the XXI<sup>st</sup> century
- Build an actual map of exploitable sponge grounds at a Mediterranean scale of the different species
- Work on the two important centres of the sponge fishery Greece and Tunisia. Tunisia concentrated on local fishing whereas greek fishermen exported themselves in other countries even out of the Mediterranean.



 Have an approach by individuals and trace the evolution of a sponge fisherman family in time and space.

### **Tools / Means**

- Field surveys / testimonies
- Exploitation of archives
- Religious records of Tunisia, Lebanon
- Database on the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century (D. Faget)
- Localised field work, prospection

