

Happy New Year - may 2023 prove to be a productive and prosperous year for everyone!

After a 2-year Covid-19 hiatus, the CCHRI is reviving its program of in-person meetings and colloquia. For the first part of 2023 we have two events planned:

The 4th CCHRI Intensive Introductory Workshop: Palaeosciences and Environmental history for historians and archaeologists

16-26 January 2023. Princeton University

This 8-day entry-level workshop will introduce participants from the fields of history and archaeology to the palaeoecological sciences and their relevance to historical and archaeological research. Beginning with an overview of palaeoecology, how it works and how it can be used, the program will offer brief surveys of a number of key ecological sciences: stable isotope analysis and sedimentary geochemistry; speleothems, ice cores, palynology and dendrochronology; C14 dating, multi-proxy data, and more. The focus will be on pollen analysis, including data presentation, reconstruction of past vegetation, climate and land cover, and sampling strategies. The workshop will explain how such proxies are interpreted, the conceptual basis for the reconstructions derived from them, and the assumptions, uncertainties, and statistical methods for data transformation that accompany their use. Registered participants are from Princeton, Harvard, Yale, Georgetown and Cornell as well as from research institutes in Germany. The course is led by Warren J Eastwood and Chris Bradley (University of Birmingham, UK) and John Haldon (History, Princeton). Special guest speaker will be Prof. Andrew Dugmore (Edinburgh U, CUNY, NABO). The program is organised in collaboration with Princeton's Seeger Center for Hellenic Studies, the High Meadows Environmental Institute, the Department of History and the Center for Collaborative History.

CCHRI 2023 Colloquium: Late Antique Pandemics in Context: New Perspectives, New Collaborations, New Histories

21-22 April 2023. Georgetown University

In April we head to Georgetown University for an interdisciplinary workshop on epidemics. The event will focus on the late antique Mediterranean, but contributions will address diverse evidence for disease outbreaks from across Afro-Eurasia. Historians, archaeologists, physical anthropologists and palaeogenomicists will collaborate on investigating the extent of our knowledge about disease outbreaks, ~100-900 CE.

Some recent events and activities

13-14 October 2022. Mortara Center, Georgetown University, Conference organized by Dagomar Degroot. "Resilience to Climate Change, Past and Present", at which several CCHRI members presented papers.

29 August-1 September 2022. Binn, Switzerland (workshop organized by the University of Basel). "The End of the Roman Climate Optimum and the Disintegration of the Roman Empire."

In August 2022 core members of CCHRI (Haldon, Izdebski, Mordechai, Newfield) contributed to this international meeting organized within the frame of the SNSF-Project "The Roman Egypt Laboratory: Climate, Change, Societal Transformations, and the Transition to Late Antiquity" led by Prof. Sabine Huebner. This was the first meeting specifically devoted to the notion of a Roman Climate Optimum and its impact on the fate of the Roman Empire. A period of unusually warm and humid weather in Europe and the Mediterranean from roughly 200 BCE to 150 CE, the so-called 'Roman Climate Optimum' or 'Roman Warm Period' has been linked by some historians to the expansion of the Roman Empire to its greatest extent. The workshop examined the implications of a Roman Climate Optimum for writing Roman environmental, political, social and economic history, and brought climate scientists, ancient historians and environmental archaeologists around one table. Special emphasis was placed on the challenges of a collaboration between ancient historians, archaeologists and palaeoclimatologists, the methodological difficulties in distinguishing between correlation and causality, and methods of assessing the impact of climatic variability or change on ancient societies without oversimplifying causal connections.

The International Advisory Panel on Environmental History and Policy (<https://envhist4p.org/>) is a joint CCHRI and Max-Planck Institute for Geoanthropology (Jena) initiative established in 2021 and reflecting also key aspects of CCHRI's latest research project (<https://climatechangeandhistory.princeton.edu/about/project-goals>). Over several weeks from March to June 2022 we organized a webinar series on this theme (*Environmental History Meets Public Policy*) in collaboration with several other institutions (recordings accessible [here](#)). *The work of the EnvHist4P group will soon be supported by a 2-year postdoctoral research position to be held at both the MPI and Princeton jointly. This exciting new initiative is generously funded for CCHRI and EnvHist4P by the High Meadows Environmental Institute at Princeton and the MPI at Jena, for whose substantial financial support we are extremely grateful.*

Some recent publications following from CCHRI-organized workshops

M. Eisenberg and L. Mordechai, 'The short- and long-term effects of an early medieval pandemic', in A. Izdebski et al., eds., *Perspectives on Public Policy in Societal-Environmental Crises* (Springer Nature: Cham 2022), 291-303 https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-94137-6_19

D. Fleitmann, J. Haldon et al., 'Droughts and societal change: The environmental context for the emergence of Islam in late Antique Arabia', *Science* 376 (2022) 1317-1321. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abg4044>

J. Haldon et al., 'SDG 13 – How societies succeeded or failed to respond to environmental disruption', in M. Gutmann and D. Gorman, eds., *Before the SDGs: A Historical Companion to the UN Sustainable Development Goals* (Oxford: OUP 2022) 385-424 <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192848758.003>

J. Haldon, 'From past to present: comments on history and policy', in *Lessons from the History of UK Environmental Policy* (London: British Academy 2022) 9-20, accessible [here](#)

A. Izdebski, J. Haldon and P. Filipkowski, eds., *Perspectives on Public Policy in Societal-Environmental Crises: What the Future Needs from History* (Springer Nature: Cham 2022), published as open access and downloadable at: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-94137-6> (following from the CCHRI webinar series in fall 2020 entitled "Past answers to current concerns: approaches to understanding historical societal resilience" and an online workshop "What sort of the Past does the Future need?" organised by the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History with the Polish Academy of Sciences).

A. Izdebski et al., 'L'émergence d'une histoire environnementale interdisciplinaire. Une approche conjointe de l'Holocène tardif', *Annales HSS* 77 (2022) 11-58 <https://doi.org/10.1017/ahss.2022.114>

T. Newfield, et al., 'Smallpox's Antiquity in Doubt', *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 35 (2022), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1047759422000290>

A. Rosen et al., 'Holocene desertification, traditional ecological knowledge, and human resilience in the eastern Gobi Desert, Mongolia', *The Holocene* 12 (2022), 1462-1476. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09596836221121777>

A. Tubi, L. Mordechai et al., 'Can we learn from the past? Towards better analogies and historical inference in society-environmental change research', *Global Environmental Change* 76 (2022), 102570. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2022.102570>

For more information about our ongoing research projects see <https://cchri.princeton.edu/>

CCHRI is endorsed by the PAGES organization (Past Global Changes) and is a member of the MedCliVar group (Mediterranean Climate Variability and Predictability). As always, we would like to thank our sponsors at Princeton for their generous support for our activities, in particular the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies, the High Meadows Environmental Institute and the Center for Collaborative History. We also thank the National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center, the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History (Paleo-Science & History Independent Research Group), and the Georgetown Health Initiative.

