



## **HISTORIES OF EARTH SCIENCES: VISUAL AND INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES AMID AN ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS**

Università degli Studi dell'Insubria,  
Villa Toeplitz, via G.B. Vico, Varese, Italy

**June 6, 2023**

For decades now, the history of Earth sciences has been a ground for the development of interdisciplinary research. Historians and scientists from different disciplines have been contributing with methodologies coming from the history of institutions, art history, visual studies, material studies, geoscientific fields (such as integrating geoscientific iconography or retreating historical fieldwork), philosophy, gender studies, the history of literature, political and colonial histories, disciplinary histories, and history of fieldwork.

In the recent years, this convergence of various methodologies has only been accelerated by a rising interest for the history of Earth sciences, which is now considered a critical resource to improve the management of natural collections, to guide the decolonization of institutions and practices, and to better address the protection of geoheritage and geosites, as well as their representations. Such issues, which situates the Earth and its deep history at the center of a complex web of social, political, and economic stakes, have been prompting new ways of questioning the historical production of knowledge about and from the Earth.

This conference pursues two related objectives: (1) considering new interdisciplinary approaches to study the history and the images of Earth sciences and (2) reflecting on the responsibilities that come with studying the history of Earth sciences amid a global, environmental crisis. Indeed, this context forces us to reconsider our historical relationship to the Earth, its landscape, resources, and dynamics. The ambition of this conference is to begin a conversation on what a sustainable and responsible historiography of Earth sciences can look like in the face of today's environmental and social challenges.

The scope and themes are intentionally broad, with a particular focus on visual and material culture and the history of climate and environment. We welcome propositions investigating such aspects of Earth sciences' history from the early modern period to the present day. Propositions can range from close analysis of specific historical cases to broader methodological reflections on multidisciplinary in the history of Earth sciences.

The conference, organized by Maddalena Napolitani and Victor Monnin, is hosted by the Center for the History of the Mountains, Material Culture and Earth Sciences of the University of Insubria in Varese and is sponsored by INHIGEO, the International Commission on the History of Geological Sciences (affiliated to the International Union of Geological Sciences and to the Division of History of Science and Technology of the International Union of History and Philosophy of Science and Technology).

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**PROGRAM**

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|---------|--|
| 9:30am  | Welcome address by Ezio Vaccari (University of Insubria, INHIGEO President)  |
| 9:40am  | Introduction to the symposium by Victor Monnin (Henri-Poincaré Archives)   |
| 10:00am | <p><b>First Panel: Visual Approaches</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sarah J. Moore (University of Arizona)<br/><i>Digging in Deep Time/Deep Earth: Charles Willson Peale's Mastodon</i></li><li>• Katerina E. Zouboulakis (Trinity College Dublin)<br/><i>The Visual Culture of Earth System Science: the case study of Met Éireann</i></li><li>• Amelia Urry (University of Cambridge)<br/><i>Continental Pictures: "Earth Resources" and the construction of satellite planetary vision, 1972-present</i></li></ul>   |
| 11:20am | Coffee Break   |
| 11:30am | <p><b>Second Panel: Literary Approaches</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Khallaf El Ghalbi (Moulay Ismail University of Meknes)<br/><i>Contribution of Arab-Muslim Geographic heritage to the study of the late Holocene Climate Changes in Khorezm district (Central Asia)</i></li><li>• Johannes Riquet (Tampere University)<br/><i>Writing the Earth in Early Modern England: Shakespeare and Geomorphology</i></li><li>• Desmond Kraege (University of Lausanne)<br/><i>Volcanic Temporalities: The Voyage pittoresque de Naples et de Sicile and Consciousness of Geological Change in the Human Landscape of the Phlegrean Fields</i></li></ul> |
| 1:00pm  | Lunch  |

2:30pm

**Third Panel: Archival Approaches**

- Daniele Musumeci (University of Catania)  
*The evolution of modern volcanology on Etna and Vesuvius*
- Margret Hamilton, Marianne Heninger, Barbara Holly, Peter Nagl, Ricarda Wohlshlägl (University of Vienna)  
*Geological research at the Geological Archive of the University of Vienna, sources and tools in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries*
- Sandra Klos (Austrian Academy of Sciences)  
*“A Female Humboldt” – 165 years of Ida Pfeiffer’s Memory in Austria*

3:50pm

Coffee Break

4:00pm

**Fourth Panel: Material Approaches**

- Camila Medina Novoa (ETH Zürich)  
*Hardy Species: A Perspective on Climate Through the Lens of Transplanted Ornamental Trees*
- Ziu Bruckmann and Marion Moutal (EPF Lausanne)  
*Size, Scale and the Physical: How to Represent the Anthropocene as a Model?*

5:30pm

Closing remarks by Maddalena Napolitani (University of Insubria)