

REPORT(H)A

PORTUGUESE NETWORK
OF ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

IV MEETING OF REPORT(H)A

SAPIENS, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

Natural and Artificial Frontiers

October 14th to 16th 2021

BOOKLET

Program & Abstracts



Introduction

O **Centro de História da Sociedade e da Cultura (CHSC)**, em parceria com o **Instituto de Investigação Interdisciplinar da Universidade de Coimbra (iii- UC)** e o **Centro de Ecologia Funcional (CFE)** têm a honra de acolher e convidá-lo para IV Encontro da REPORT(H)A - Rede Portuguesa de História Ambiental, entre 14 e 16 de outubro de 2021.

O encontro adota, numa perspetiva interdisciplinar, o título **Sapiens, Saúde e Meio Ambiente - Fronteiras Naturais e Artificiais**

The Centre for History of Society and Culture (**CHSC**), in partnership with the Institute of Interdisciplinary Research of the University of Coimbra (**iii-UC**) and the Centre for Functional Ecology (**CFE**) are honored to host and invite you to the **IV Meeting of REPORT(H)A – the Portuguese Network of Environmental History**, between **14th and 16th October 2021**.

This year the meeting adopts, in an interdisciplinary perspective, the title **Sapiens, Health and the Environment - Natural and Artificial Frontiers**.



Organising Committee

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Carmen Soares – CECH, Centre for Classical and Humanistic Studies – University of Coimbra

Lúcio Cunha – CEGOT, Centre of Studies in Geography and Spatial Planning – University of Coimbra

Irina Velicu – Just Food project, CES, Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra

Dulce Freire – ReSEED – Rescuing Seed’s Heritage [ERC funded project] | CEIS20, Centre of 20th Century Interdisciplinary Studies – University of Coimbra

Leituras e limites na análise de pinturas para o estudo da Pequena Idade do Gelo. “The Hunters in the Snow” de Pieter Bruegel, 1565: um estudo de caso.

Readings and limits in the analysis of paintings for the study of the Little Ice Age. "The Hunters in the Snow" by Pieter Bruegel, 1565: a case study.

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Abstract

The analysis of the representation of climate and extreme weather phenomena in pictorial sources does not result from a direct reading of the visual perception of the work.

To distinguish what is a representation of reality and what is attributed to the author's artistic construction of free interpretation, a methodological analysis is required, which must cross several sources that allow the obtained results to be validated as much as possible.

Moreover, the further one goes back in time, the less aware people were of the climate; thus, the representation of extreme weather phenomena depended on the collective perception that was made of them.

The date of the work being analysed coincides with an extraordinarily severe winter, during a period that the scientific community designates as the Little Ice Age (LIA). This work by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1565-1569), is the forerunner of a style that would concur with the Dutch Golden Age, the Winter landscape, previously represented only sporadically.

The works of this style can be studied regarding their connection with the most severe weather cycles or patterns, which together allow the assessment of the LIA climate norms. However, despite the climate having always been important for human communities, it must not be looked at as the only shaper of landscapes represented throughout history. Their analysis must also regard the social, political and cultural context, as well as the style patterns of each period. The readings that can be done to artworks of this style are conditioned not only by the climate deterioration of this period but also by the circumstances of extraordinary economic development and consolidation of the nation-state: a true social and economic revolution that created a feeling of euphoria, as opposed to the depression inherent to the LIA.

This dichotomy was reflected not only in Bruegel's work but also in works of painters such as Hendrick Averkamp (1535-1634), Lucas van Valckenborch (1535-1597), among many others.

Do the represented weather conditions match the reality at each moment? Can the landscapes and represented scenes be read in their limitations, as sources for the study of History? Do the repetitions of scenes and extras in various authors suggest a collective social pattern or a unity of style around elements of greater acceptance by the spectators?

Do the limitations inherent to painting as a perceptual element, as an aesthetic experience that appeals to one's sensitive knowledge and affectivity, allow one to analyse it as a source for History?

From the work "The Hunters in the Snow" by Pieter Bruegel, we will proceed to analyse the spaces, the traces and colour, and the balances of the painting. We will continue through the analysis of the scene and characters, the iconography, and the iconology present in the work.

Purged of elements of aesthetic or subjective nature, we can read the work as a credible source for the study of the History of Climate.

Keywords

Painting, style unit, collective perception, historical source

