

March 18, 2021

Digital exhibition shows traces of historical climate change through the millennia

The online exhibition "[Weathered History](#)" of the Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO) visualises climate history for the first time using objects from 12,000 years of human history. On display are diverse testimonies from a wide range of countries, from cave paintings to sometimes curious technical inventions such as the 'dandy horse' and weather reports on cigarette packets from Hong Kong. The exhibition, which is available in German and English, was realised in cooperation with the CRIAS working group of the international research network [Past Global Changes](#) (PAGES).

Humans have always been confronted with changing environmental conditions and climate changes. Extreme weather events such as droughts, floods and storms or natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions often brought destruction and death. They imprinted themselves on the memory of the survivors and left more or less visible traces in art, science and everyday life. The exhibition "[Weathered History](#)" follows some of these traces. Some objects may be surprising witnesses to the memory of weather catastrophes; but they also show how skilfully historical societies adapted to climate changes. The selection of objects is global, but there are remarkable pieces from the German-speaking countries in particular: The oldest drinkable wine in the world, which owes its creation to a millennial summer; a miniature horn made of clay for protection against thunderstorms from Martin Luther's childhood home or the bell that inspired Friedrich Schiller to write his famous poem of the same name.

The online exhibition was curated by GWZO staff members Diana Lucia Feitsch and Dr Martin Bauch, who leads the VW Foundation-funded Freigeist Junior Research Group "[The Dantean Anomaly \(1309-1321\)](#)" at the Institute. The team examines rapid climate change at the beginning of the 14th century and its effects on late medieval Europe. "What is unique about the exhibition is that no one ever tried to present a history of climate change with objects. Every researcher knows the one or the other object, but they have never been brought together. We tried to do that in a selection. I think we have successfully assembled the collective knowledge of a large professional community from the humanities and natural sciences", says Martin Bauch. The greatest difficulty in realizing the exhibition was the current tense global pandemic situation. "It has been a challenge to clarify publication rights from around the world and get images with a decent resolution in these pandemic times," Diana Lucia Feitsch says, "with archives and libraries closed or hardly available for requests."

On the GWZO's YouTube channel, the two curators provide a more detailed insight into the exhibition "[Weathered History](#)", which can now be visited online. For example, they explain their motives for creating this exhibition and present their personal favourite piece. The interview is the first episode of the new in-house GWZO video series "Ostblick", which allows insights into the work at the GWZO even under pandemic conditions. | <https://youtu.be/lnjQroBDZtM>

To the exhibition | <https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/weathered-history/hwJiMeBlg6zDLq?hl=en>

The *Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe* (GWZO) conducts comparative research on historical and cultural phenomena and processes in the area between the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the Adriatic Sea from the early Middle Ages to the present. The researchers working at the institute represent various disciplines of the humanities, including archaeology, history, art history and literary studies. In its research work, the GWZO relies on a dense network of cooperative relationships with academic institutions in Europe and overseas. www.leibniz-gwzo.de

Further Information:

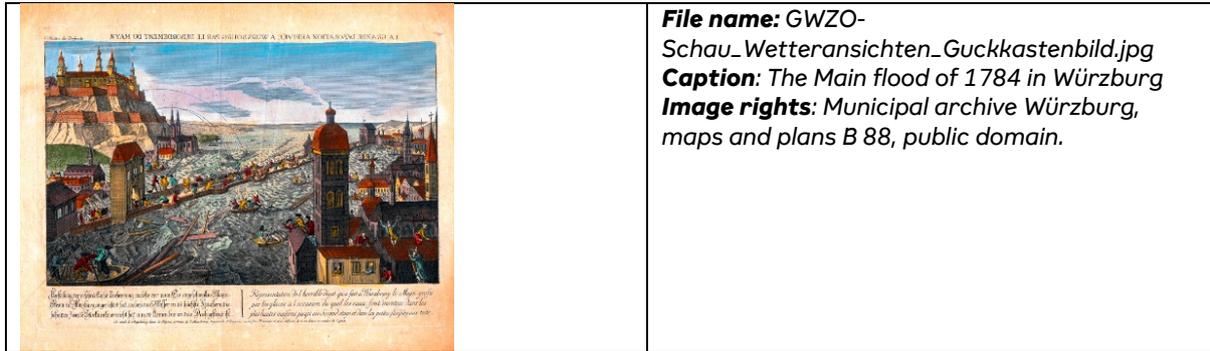
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High-resolution images for download (use free of charge if source is acknowledged):
<https://speicherwolke.uni-leipzig.de/index.php/s/XczqniKwTnPr4AA>

Thumbnail	File name, caption, Image rights
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	<p>File name: GWZO-Schau_Wetteransichten_Hochwassermarken.jpg Caption: Flood marks in Würzburg at the archway of the southern entrance to the town hall Image rights: © Martin Bauch, 2020.</p>
	<p>File name: GWZO-Schau_Wetteransichten_Steinwein.jpg Caption: 1540 Steinwein bottle Image rights: Leihgabe, Stiftung Bürgerspital zum Hl. Geist – Weingut, © Christof Herdt.</p>



The Institute is co-financed with tax revenues on the basis of the budget approved by the Saxon State Parliament.