

**International workshop:**  
**The Rise and Fall: Environmental Factors in the  
Socio-Cultural Changes of the Ancient Silk Road Area**

September 28-29, 2017  
Olshausenstr. 75, S2-168  
Kiel University, Germany

# Call for Papers

**Conveners:**

Dr. Liang E. Yang, Graduate School Human Development in Landscapes, Kiel University  
Prof. Dr. Josef Wiesehöfer, Institute of Classical Antiquity, Kiel University  
Prof. Dr. Hans-Rudolf Bork, Institute for Ecosystem Research, Kiel University  
Millinda Hoo, Graduate School Human Development in Landscapes, Kiel University

**Supported by:** Graduate School Human Development in Landscapes, Kiel University  
Past Global Changes project (PAGES)

The Silk Road is a modern concept for an ancient network of trade routes that for centuries facilitated and intensified processes of cultural interaction and goods exchange between West China, Central Asia, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean. The Silk Road flourished when the Han dynasty explored Central Asia around 139 BCE and thrived throughout Antiquity and far into Middle Ages under the Islamic and Mongol Empires. Along the ancient Silk Road, empires, dynasties and the associated institutions, social structures, and economic systems changed for several reasons. There is increasing discussion that climate and environmental factors may also have played a role in fostering economic and socio-cultural changes along the Silk Road and in a broader area. Coherent patterns and synchronous events in history suggest possible links between social upheaval and climate/environment forces; in some cases, environmental factors have been claimed as multipliers that accelerated socio-cultural changes. Such links between climatic, environmental, economic, social, and cultural changes would have manifested themselves differently according to place and time; however, it often remains unclear if and how exactly they affect socio-cultural situations on the ground.

The Silk Road serves as the geographical scope and inspirational concept for the workshop. The objective of this workshop is to increase our understanding of the role played by the environment in socio-cultural changes that occurred in the territories along the ancient Silk Roads, and to initiate a network of young researchers to facilitate international connectivity and multidisciplinary cooperation. Specific topics include (but are not limited to):

- Paleoclimate and environment changes in the Silk Road area
- Proxy reconstructions of environment disasters and socio-cultural consequences
- Climate-related human migration and demographic changes
- Conflicts, cooperation, institution, and social organization under environmental stresses
- Quantitative, qualitative, and material culture approaches to analyzing relationships between environmental and social and cultural changes

The workshop especially encourages junior researchers (PhD students and postdocs) to participate. Interested participants are encouraged to submit a 500 word abstract via email [lyang@gshdl.uni-kiel.de](mailto:lyang@gshdl.uni-kiel.de) by June 30, 2017, and state the willingness to submit a full paper. Full paper is due by the time of the workshop for the peer review process, and a book of the proceedings will be published by early 2018.

Authors will be notified of acceptance/rejection by 14 July 2017. Those selected to contribute to the workshop will receive full funding to cover the costs of participation.

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