

ICOHTEC NEWSLETTER

Nº205 December 2023

www.icohtec.org



Editor: Saara Matala, Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden.

If you have something to announce, please mail to newsletter@icohtec.org.



Joint annual meeting of the International Committee for the History of Technology (ICOHTEC) and the Society for the History of Technology (SHOT) on 9-14 July 2024 in Viña del Mar, Chile.

DL for proposals December 18, 2023.

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1 Icohtec News

1.1 Sławomir Łotysz winner of Kazimierz Moczarski History Prize

Our Past President of the Icohtec (2017-2021), Sławomir Łotysz, was honoured by the most important book prize of Poland, the Kazimierz Moczarski History Prize 2023 for his book “[Pripet Marshes: Nature, knowledge, and politics in Polish Polesie until 1945](#)” [Pińskie błota. Natura, wiedza i polityka na polskim Polesiu do 1945 roku] Kraków: Universitas 2022.

The prize is given by the Capital City of Warsaw, the History Meeting House and the Kazimierz and Zofia Moczarski Foundation. The National Library is a partner of the award. “Gazeta Wyborcza” is the media patron. The laudation was given by Historian Andrzej Friszke, Polish Academy of Science:

‘Pripet Marshes: Nature, knowledge, and politics in Polish Polesie until 1945’ by Sławomir Łotysz is an innovative book, perfectly documented with sources and anchored in contemporary issues. A book that provides answers about the past, while prompting questions about our present and future. ...

The Polish historical library has long waited for such a book. ... Sławomir Łotysz’s work de-charms the ‘Polesia charm,’ while at the same time drawing sensitive attention to the real problems of the wetlands. This is a great contribution to our knowledge of the so-called Borderlands, but also a book that makes us more conscious of today’s environmental problems and anxieties about climate catastrophe. ‘Pińskie Błota’ provides a perspective that allows us to see contemporary problems in a historical mirror.” (Quoted and translated from “Gazeta Wyborcza,” 26 November 2023)

Warm congratulations from ICOHTEC’s Executive Board and all ICOHTEC colleagues!

1.2 Icohtec Prizes 2023

The [Maurice Daumas Prize](#) for best papers on the history of technology and the [Turriano Icohtec Prize](#) for books on history of technology were both awarded in the General Assembly online on November 16, 2023, when the participants could also listen to the presentations of the winners. The Maurice Daumas prize winners are introduced in this Newsletter while the Turriano Icohtec Prize winners will be presented in the next issue in January, 2024.

1.3 Report of the Maurice Daumas Prize committee

The Maurice Daumas prize was created in 2011 to award the best history of technology papers published by young scholars. It is sponsored by the Université de technologie de Belfort-Montbéliard (UTBM), in France. This prize attracts a great interest among young researchers around the world. The papers presented show the dynamism and the high standard of the young scholars.

In the 2023 appeal, 15 papers from scholars working in 8 countries had been presented. The subjects deal with a number of interesting questions in several fields: geology in Panamá and the Anthropocene; sexuality and medicine; techniques of pharmaceutical measurement; experimental cities; technoscience and environment; technologizing the languages; fire alarm and politics; restoring medieval buildings in the XIX century; early aviation techniques in France; agriculture technology in Andalusian heritage; inequalities in Soviet institutions; early aviation in Mexico; electricity as a promise in early XX century Spain; co-innovation in the former German Democratic Republic; spinning machinery and the mass production in China.

Given that the papers presented were published in peer-reviewed journals and books, the standard of all of them is very high. Thus, the committee has had actual difficulties to select the best among the papers presented.

In 31 July 2023, after the corresponding deliberations, the committee has decided to award ex-aequo two papers, that would share the 2023 prize; it has also decided to give two honorarium mentions.

Thus, the ICOHTEC Maurice Daumas Article Prize 2023 (the thirteenth) is awarded to:

Rebecca L. Jackson, [“The Uncertain Method of Drops’: How a Non-Uniform Unit Survived the Century of Standardization”](#), Perspectives on Science, vol. 29, no. 6, 2021, pp. 802-841. DOI 10.1162/posc_a_00395

Ex – aequo with:

Jan Hua-Henning, [“Opening the Red Box: The Fire Alarm Telegraph and Politics of Risk Response in Imperial Germany, 1873–1900”](#), Technology and Culture, Volume 62, Number 3, July 2021, pp. 685-708. DOI 10.1353/tech.2021.0104

Rebecca L. Jackson is at present PhD Candidate in History and Philosophy of Science and Medicine at the Indiana University, USA. She has an education in fields of mathematics and history and philosophy of

medicine. Her focus in this paper is the striking use of “drops” as measurement in the field of pharmaceuticals from the XIX century. The text is as good as it is well researched. In the tradition of Siegfried Giedion, she follows to feed on the small or neglected aspects of scientific civilization - in this specific case, the importance of the drop as a unit of measurement. Her analysis is mainly based on professional journals but she is able to study a professional practice.

Jan Hua-Henning is assistant professor of the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology Duke Kunshan University, China. In 2022, he got his doctorate at the University of Toronto. Previously, he studied at the University of Darmstadt. His paper analyses the fire alarm telegraph installed in Frankfurt in the second half of the XIX century, under liberal local administrations. The network of telegraph covered all the quarters of the city, whatever their social level, including, at the same time, a system of social control. The author deals with a non-common subject in the history of cities and risk and open the way to a new perspective of urban development in Europe and the States in the XIX century.

The committee would like to give two honorary mentions to:

Pete Soland, “Flying machines as a measure of Mexico. National Reconstruction, the Cultural Revolution, and the Maturation of Mexico’s National Aviation Program 1921-1945”. In J. Justin Castro; James A. Garza (ed.) [Technocratic Visions. Engineering, Technology, and Society in Mexico](#), Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2022, p. 157-180.

Szilvia Gellai, “Minnesota Experimental City, oder: Zukunft als Experiment”, [Technikgeschichte](#), Bd. 88, 2021, H. 1, p. 43-77. DOI 105771/0040-117X-2021-1-43

Pete Soland is Assistant Professor of Latin American and World History at the Department of History and Anthropology, Southeast Missouri State University, USA. His paper is devoted to the examination of early Mexican aviation as a focal point of social, political, and cultural tensions. This unique viewpoint follows the narrative of various influences and is based on the reexamined evidence and discussions surrounding aviation.

Szilvia Gellai is a postdoc researcher at the University of Vienna, Austria, Department of German Studies, Modern German Literature / Media Theory. Her paper deals with the "Minnesota Experimental City Project" which was developed and promoted between 1966 and 1973 and aimed to work out a universal

prototype for solving urban problems. On the basis of a convincing theoretical approach, the author analyses the origins and development of this project and the failure to put it into reality.

1.4 Interview of the Maurice Dumas Prize winners

In this section, we will introduce the two winners of the shared first prize, Doctor Rebecca Jackson and Doctor Jan Hua-Henning.

Who are you and how did you get interested in the history of technology?

Doctor Jackson: My name is Rebecca Jackson, I'm currently a Visiting Postdoctoral Fellow at the [Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin](#). I recently received my PhD in History and Philosophy of Science and Medicine from Indiana University – Bloomington in the US. My journey towards history of technology was through my philosophical interest in what it means to measure, particularly when epistemic activities are taken seriously as embodied practices which much take place in a constrained space and timeframe.

Doctor Hua-Henning:

I am a historian of risk and technology. My current book project aims to uncover the origins of modern emergency response. My methodological approach provides material evidence for how social norms and political values found their way into risk management. During my undergrad, I was so fortunate to learn from Mikael Hård. A seminar on infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa showed me the great relevance of technology in history. Working as his research assistant allowed me to appreciate the topical range and intellectual depth of this comparatively small field.

Your winning article in 2 sentences?

Doctor Jackson: In Anglo-American pharmacy and medicine during the 19th century, there were attempts to replace the variable fluid unit of “Drops” with a standardized unit, the “minim.” By looking at the reasons why the drop endured, and why the minim fell into obscurity, I highlight the material and rhetorical roles units must play in successful epistemic activities—whether standardized, or not.

Doctor Hua-Henning:

My study of the fire alarm telegraph, hailed by contemporaries as revolutionary technology in the nineteenth century, offers detailed insight into the technopolitics of risk – a yet uncharted territory. Virtually unknown to historians, yet central to urban risk management, fire-alarm technology emerged as a material contract between authoritarianism and liberalism in the nineteenth century.

Do you have any memories from Icohtec/Your favorite memory from Icohtec?**Doctor Jackson:**

I've actually never been to ICOHTEC in person, and this prize was a very welcome introduction to the community through an online meeting. I was extremely impressed with the other award winners, whose fascinating topics were as wide-ranging as emotions experienced in the first public planetariums (Helen Ahner) to the role of early fire safety networks in state surveillance (Jan Hua-Henning).

Doctor Hua-Henning:

I fondly recall my first Icohtec conference in 2020, which was also my first virtual conference presentation. Although I was not yet used to speaking to my screen, I was thankful for the valuable comments I received. Many scholars whose work I regularly read meet at Icohtec. Hence, I will continue to participate – both virtually and in person.

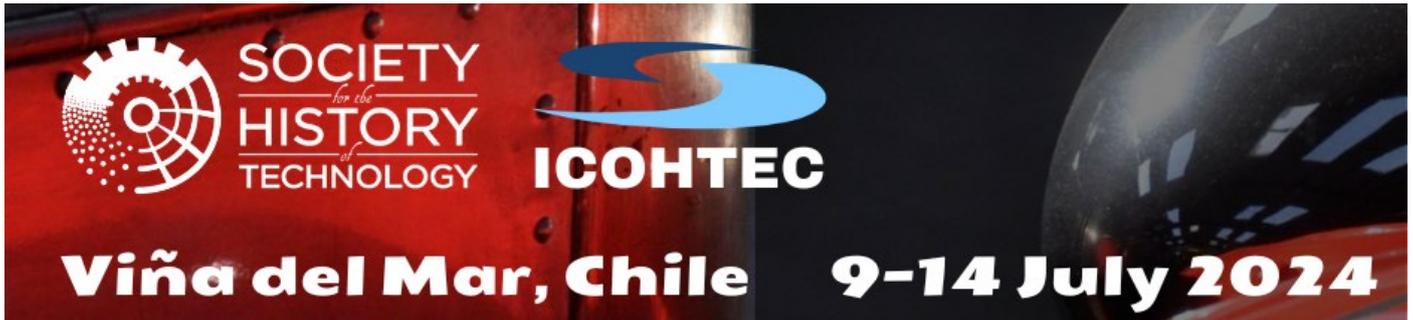
Advice for early career scholars when planning to publish in high-quality journals?**Doctor Jackson:**

Expect that 90% of the required time and energy will be spent on the part that comes after your first submission. Even very favorable reviewers may require a lot from you, and the piece will be better for it in the end. That said, recognize that there's only so much one paper can do. Learning how to identify the difference between “feedback for this particular paper” and “feedback for a future expansion of this project” will save you a lot of frustration and lead to fruitful new directions.

Doctor Hua-Henning:

I would recommend trusting the advice from advisors and journal editors because it will help you improve your work. Likewise, after spending considerable time on research, reflection, and writing, trust in your ability to publish in a high-quality journal and submit your article.

1.5 Reminder: DL for proposals for Icohtec/SHOT in Chile approaching



ICOHTEC-SHOT 2024 in Viña del Mar (Chile) / Congreso conjunto de SHOT y ICOHTEC: Reparando / Repair in the History of Technology

The final deadline for all paper and panel submissions is **18 December 2023**.

More information: <https://www.historyoftechnology.org/>

The CFP in Spanish: <https://www.icohtec.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/2024-icohtec-shot-convocatoria.pdf>

The program committee will accept proposals in **English and Spanish**, as well as for sessions that include both languages.

The technological environments we inhabit require continual repair and maintenance in order to function. Yet the people on whom such repairs rely—along with their knowledge and labor—too often remain unseen and undervalued, becoming visible only in cases of infrastructural breakdown nor spectacular disaster. The routine invisibility of repair facilitates grand proclamations of technological

solutionism, distracting from the requirements for living equitably in an increasingly fragmented and fragile world.

How does our understanding of the history of technology change when we center repair and maintenance? Such a shift involves highlighting users and experiential knowledge. It opens up conceptions of what counts as technological knowledge and who counts as technological actors. Such themes have lurked in our field for some time, mounting in scale and significance over the last decade. Repair is now part of our vocabulary, here to stay. The time has come to make it the thematic core of our annual meeting. The first joint conference between ICOHTEC and SHOT in three decades, to be held bilingually in Viña del Mar, Chile, provides the ideal place for doing so.

Reparando—the gerund of repair in Spanish—holds a special place in the history of Chile, a nation at the intersection of several tectonic plates. Chileans accept seismic activity as part of everyday life, remaining unfazed by mild earthquakes. Of course, the stronger earthquakes are deeply disruptive, destroying cities and communities. In 1960, the deadliest earthquake registered in human history (magnitude 9.5) struck the southern region of Valdivia. Accompanied by a tsunami, the Great Chilean Earthquake destroyed livelihoods and property, and took thousands of lives. This destruction required not just concrete infrastructural repair, but also social and emotional repair for traumatized victims. The Chilean experience highlights the need to approach repair as a practice of human and technological resilience, in which cooperation and compassion are as essential as material rebuilding and fixing.

This is the context in which we invite a critical appraisal of the concept, strategies, and philosophies of repair. How does repair/*reparando* sustain our built environment and our daily lives? How can we think through brokenness, restoration, and care? What and who counts as “normal,” and how does that affect our infrastructures? How do people excluded from infrastructural benefits use rebuilding, repurposing, adjusting, and *reparando* as navigational strategies? How do discussions about repair and repurposing reflect social, political, and cultural dynamics? What does *reparando* look like at different scales, from the individual to the planetary? And how can focusing on these themes open a discussion of what requires repair in our own field of the history of technology – and what methodologies and approaches are needed to enact that repair?

The final deadline for all paper and panel submissions is 18 December 2023. Please consult the conference website (<https://www.historyoftechnology.org/>) for detailed submission guidelines.

Program Committee

Diana J. Montañó (Chair), Magdalena Zdrodowska (Associate Chair), Itty Abraham, Leticia Galluzzi, José Ragas, Verónica Ramírez Errázuriz.

1.6 Icohtec membership fee: Paypal and the old way

We are happy to announce, that it is now possible to pay the Icohtec membership fee also using the Paypal service. The receiver is @icohtectreasury or the email icohtectreasury@gmail.com.

Annual membership fee is 40 Euro or US Dollars for individuals, 20 Euro or US Dollars for students (billed biannually), 75 Euro or US Dollars for institutions. The membership benefits include:

- a vote at ICOHTEC elections, either online or in person at the meetings
- a paper copy of our journal ICON appearing once a year (plus any special issues)
- access to the online repository of the back issues of ICON
- a monthly Newsletter delivered to member's e-mail address

It is also possible to pay the annual fees to our account at: Commerzbank Bochum, "ICOHTEC" at Commerzbank Bochum (Husemannplatz 3-4, D-44787 Bochum, Germany): IBAN: DE44 4304 0036 0390 2590 00; BIC: COBADEFFXXX.

Please send in the form on the last page of the Newsletter about your payment and renewed membership to the Treasurer Viktor Pál, viktor.paal@gmail.com and Stefan Poser, President of ICOHTEC, stefan.poser@kit.edu, in order to update our list of members.

Thank you for your support!

2 Conferences and Seminars

2.1 CFP: Icohtec 52th Annual Meeting in 2025, New Zealand

Deadline for submissions of Icohtec symposia proposals is **1 February 2024**.

Time and place: **29 June - 5 July 2025**, Dunedin, New Zealand.



University of Otago in Dunedin. Photo credits: Nathan Hughes Hamilton, CC By 2.0, Wikimedia

The 52nd Annual Meeting of the [International Committee for the History of Technology \(ICOHTEC\)](#) will be part of the 27th [International Congress of the History of Science and Technology \(ICHST\)](#), to be held at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand, 29 June – 5 July 2025.

The theme of the Congress, **“Peoples, Places, Exchanges, and Circulation”** encourages exploring local knowledges, practices, and histories of science, technology, and medicine in both site-specific and global contexts. It asks how local and global contexts might be related? Do local histories change if they are analyzed using a different scale of analysis, for example, through a regional or global framework? What is the role of circulation across borders in local and global histories? Have encounters (both welcome and problematic) and exchanges of knowledge, techniques, texts, peoples, and material objects between regions, cultures, or societies resulted in new configurations in the history of science, technology, and medicine? What roles have local actors played as mediators, between different knowledge systems or between producers and consumers around the world? Contributions that explore the unacknowledged agency and contributions of Indigenous peoples and underrepresented groups in the history of science, technology, and medicine are especially welcome.

ICOHTEC 52nd Annual Meeting: Call for Papers

The ICOHTEC Programme Committee invites proposals for symposium presentations exploring the ICHST theme “Peoples, Places, Exchanges, and Circulation” from diverse historical and historiographical perspectives on technology in all historical periods and geographical areas. Scholars working at the intersection of history of technology and other fields, including anthropology, design studies, film and media studies, gender studies, social sciences, philosophy, political science, ethnic and indigenous studies, are welcome to share their perspectives and analyses. We encourage presentations exploring multidisciplinary approaches, paradigms, research methods, and theories related to technology.

The Programme Committee invites proposals on topics in keeping with the ICHST theme, such as:

- **People:** visible and invisible in science and technology
 - technology from the perspective of the colonized
 - technology, history, and emotions
 - science and technology empowering/disempowering
 - repairers and maintainers

- **Places:** space, society, and technology
 - (portals of) globalization
 - re-location and de-location of industry
 - diseases and medicine in the history of cities
 - technological sites and the management of disasters

- **Exchange:** transfer of knowledge
 - "vehicles" in science and technology (trains, cars and lorries as well as books, journals, and photography)
 - technological nationalism vs. transnational science
 - teaching the history of technology

- **Circulation:** material and immaterial histories of technology
 - object biographies to product lifecycles
 - digitizing Science and Technology collections and archives
 - Large Language Models (LLMs) and their impact on concepts and problematizations
 - natural resources from upstream to downstream and from use to waste or recycling

The program committee strongly encourages proposals for **pre-constituted sessions** in both **traditional formats** (3 to 4 presenters and a chairperson) as well as **non-traditional formats**, including work-in-progress sessions, roundtables, panel discussions, PechaKucha-type presentations, flash-talks, unconference sessions, poster sessions, and interactive workshops.

Individuals and groups seeking potential collaborators to join an organized session are encouraged to propose session topic(s) and communicate with interested individuals through the ICOHTEC Newsletter (send the call to: newsletter@icohtec.org] H-NET, or social media networks, such as ICOHTEC facebook group.

In keeping with ICHST's aim to bring together as many scholars as possible, participants will be limited to one presentation. For more details, see [ICHST's Guidelines on Symposia](#).

Submission guidelines for ICOHTEC Symposium proposals

Please pay close attention to submission instructions, including the word limits for required documents. All components of submitted proposals must be written in English. Submit complete proposals via the [ICOHTEC online submission system](#) at <https://www.icohtec.org/w-annual-meeting/dunedin-2025/>

Proposals for traditional sessions of 3 or 4 papers with a session chair must include:

- Session title.
- Name(s) of organizer(s) and their title, affiliation, and e-mail address(es).
- Session description (200-400 words).
- Individual paper abstracts (200-400 words).
- Name, title, affiliation, e-mail address, and bio (250 words max.) of each presenter and chair.

Proposals for unconventional sessions must include:

- Session title.
- Name(s) of organizer(s) and their title, affiliation, and e-mail address(es).
- Session description (200-400 words)

- Name, title, affiliation, e-mail address, and bio (250 words max.) of each presenter/panelist.
- Name, title, affiliation, e-mail address, and bio (250 words max.) of chair or discussant (if any).
- Any relevant information regarding session format or requirements.

Proposals for individual papers must include:

- Paper title.
- Paper abstract (200-400 words).
- Name, title, affiliation, e-mail address, and bio (250 words max.) of presenter.

Travel grants

ICOHTEC encourages and welcomes proposal submissions from graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and early career researchers and their participation in the symposium. Limited travel grants will be available. Applications received by **15 January 2024** will be given priority consideration.

Key Dates:

Deadline for submissions of proposals to the ICOHTEC Symposia: **1 February 2024.**

Decision on accepted symposia announced: **1 June 2024**

Registration opens: **11 July 2024**

Programme published online: **1 May 2025**

ICHST Congress opens: **29 June 2025**

Programme Committee

Saara Matala (Sweden), Elena Kochetkova (Norway), Frank Edward (Tanzania)
Hugo Pereira (Portugal), Jethron Akallah (Kenya), Jan Hadlaw (Canada), Leticia Galuzzi (Brazil), Min Fanxiang (China), Sławomir Łotysz (Poland)

Please direct any queries regarding submission process to the Chair of the ICOHTEC programme committee, Dr. Saara Matala, via email (matala@chalmers.se).

More information

For practical information regarding the ICHST conference, follow updates at the conference website: <https://www.ichst2025.org/>

2.2 Tensions of Europe Early Career Summer School 2024

DL for applications: February 4, 2024

Date and place: European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder), September 16-19, 2024.

[The Tensions of Europe Early Career Scholars Committee](#) is looking forward to seeing you at the summer school “Transformations in/of the History of Technology,” organized in connection to the [11th Tensions of Europe Conference](#) “Transformations. Fundamental Change and Technology.” The summer school will take place at European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder), September 16-19, 2024. It will be followed by the Tensions of Europe Conference (September 19-21, 2024).

The summer school aims at introducing PhD’s and early career scholars to the Tensions of Europe network as well as to facilitate and encourage networking between young scholars across borders, while building their academic skills.

The summer school will also explore the main conference theme (transformations) in relation to East/West transformative encounters (or lack thereof), and to the methodologies we can use to understand and describe them.

We will critically explore past and contemporary meanings of the categories “East” and “West” in the history of technology, from a European as well as global perspective. How did our understanding of these terms change over time? Which processes of inclusion and exclusion are implied in these categories? Which transformative encounters between West and East underline the blurred and unfixed nature of this divide? Which encounters (or missed encounters) contributed instead to materialize East/West divisions?

In order to promote network building, the summer school is organized to a large extent around workshops and group discussions. Participants will be asked to do some preparatory readings (3 to 5 papers); to write a short text on their research which will be circulated before the summer school (300-500 words); and to prepare a very brief presentation on it (2-3 minutes). Additional information and materials will be provided after the notification of acceptance (Spring 2024).

We invite applicants to submit a short bio and a short text (300-500 words each) explaining their interest in the topics of the summer school and providing an example from their research which connects to the theme of East/West transformative encounters (or lack thereof, in the sense of “missed encounters”).

Applications should be sent by February 4, 2024, through this form: <https://framaforms.org/tensions-of-europe-summer-school-2024-participation-form-1700572249>

Applicants will be notified of the results by March 15, 2024. If you have questions, you can reach out to Ginevra Sanvitale (sanvitag@tcd.ie)

The participants of the summer school are expected to be on-site. Due to the highly interactive nature of most summer school sessions, we are unable to provide online participation.

The participation fee is 50 euros. It includes accommodation in the university dorms (single room with private toilet), the welcome dinner, summer school lunches and coffee breaks, transport to/from Berlin on the field visit day. A limited number of travel grants will be available for participants without institutional funding. The grant will consist of a waiver of the participation fee and support for covering travel and accommodation expenses. If you need a travel grant, please indicate so in your application.

The summer school is organised by Tensions of Europe’s Early Career Scholars Committee: Ginevra Sanvitale (Trinity College Dublin, postdoc); Michal Durco (Slovak Academy of Science, postdoc); Siegfried Evens (KTH Royal Institute of Technology, PhD); Tijana Rupčić (Central European University, PhD).

This Tensions of Europe Summer School is sponsored by the European University Viadrina and the ToE network, alongside its institutional partners, including Eindhoven University of Technology; Foundation for the History of Technology; KTH Royal Institute of Technology; Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C²DH); National and Kapodistrian University of Athens; Norsk Teknisk Museum.

For an updated program and more information, [follow the link.](#):

2.3 Open session in SHOT/Icohtec in Chile 2024: History of conservation technologies

Title: The History of Conservation Technologies in the Context of Institutionalized Heritage Protection

Organizer: PD Dr. Roman Hillmann, German Mining Museum Bochum

Email: roman.hillmann@bergbaumuseum.de

DL for proposals: December 18.

One of the earliest modern systems of state monumental preservation regulations, assigned to the building authorities' offices and based on monumental preservation laws, was introduced by Karl Friedrich Schinkel after 1815, marking the beginning of modern Monumental Preservation in Europe. What is less recognized is that, in preserving old buildings, technologies to deal with the old had to be found. For example, the Marienburg (a Gothic Castle near Gdańsk dating back to the 13th century) brought David and Friedrich Gilly, and later their friend Schinkel, to start thinking differently: They changed the idea from the assignment of why they had travelled to Marienburg in 1794 – to find technologies to demolish the huge structure – to learning how to keep, repair, and re-use such a building in bad repair.

The technologies that were invented in the following years were important because they are also applicable for any kind of architectural repair, including:

- Conservation
- Restoration
- Building documentation / Building archaeology
- Structural preservation
- Control of bio-hazards
- Corrosion mitigation

The session will commence with a talk by Dr. Alexandra Skedzuhn-Safir and Dr. Peter I. Schneider (University of Cottbus). They will examine processes of scientification, normalization, and standardization of practices in Europe after 1815.

The session will include a concluding overview of the technologies in Industrial Heritage Conservation by the session organizer.

The session is open to suitable proposals focusing on aspects of repair and conservation technologies in the context of heritage conservation.

Interested parties in this session are requested to send a one-page abstract (maximum 300 words) and a short CV (maximum 150 words) along with a contact email address and affiliation address to the session organizer roman.hillmann@bergbaumuseum.de. Please send these materials no later than December 18, 2023.

2.4 CFP: Who has shaped energy transitions? June 13-14 in Paris-La Défense

Well-established international symposium held at the initiative of TotalEnergies' archive department, in collaboration with academic history researchers under the title:

Who has shaped energy transitions? Consumers, businesses, public and social stakeholders (18th-21st century)

Date and location: June 13-14, 2024 in Paris-La Défense

Submissions: colloque-2024@totalenergies.com by **January 15, 2024**.

Languages: French and English

For more information: <https://www.archivesportaleurope.net/blog/cfp-who-shaped-energy-transitions/>

This scientific event follows the symposiums on the history of oil held in the 2010s, which showcased the oil and gas archives and developed recognized academic knowledge. The symposium provides an opportunity to renew encounters between the corporate world and scholarly historical research. Its aim is first to take stock of the history of energy transitions through what has been achieved in the past, in the archive department and the academic world. For over a decade, a number of initiatives in the French and European academic community have shone a light on the history of energy transitions by taking a systemic approach that draws on complex phenomena and long processes, across the energy landscape (Lamard, Stoskopf 2018; Massard-Guilbaud, Mathis 2019; Gross, Needham 2023). Synopses of this slowly emerging history will be provided for the enlightenment of a professional, non-academic audience. Second, this symposium is intended to further knowledge about the causes of changes in energies, and to contribute new information to the research by approaching energy history from a new angle. We have

therefore chosen to examine how the energy mixes in societies have evolved, at a global level, from the end of the 18th century to the 21st century. Among the questions arising from this subject, the subject of oil and hydrocarbons still merits further exploration.

It is important that the role of energy in the economy not be considered the only point of interest, even if it is essential, and nor should transitions be reduced to statistical considerations of physical values (Smil, 2017). The human dimension must be central to the analysis, with particular attention paid to the stakeholders in these transitions, or non-transitions, to better understand the reasons for these changes and the way they have unfolded. The human dimension is reflected in the relationships and connections between public, social and economic stakeholders, influence networks and consumers. In the field of energy transitions, decisions have been made and implemented in the light of constraints caused by climate change, meshing with economic and social realities, and sometimes influenced by pressure groups. Based on which goals, and for which desired results, who has decided, or not, on these transitions? There are therefore four focus areas for papers. They are indicative rather than prescriptive, as there is considerable overlap, so papers may address more than one.

Focus area 1: energy mix stakeholders

First of all, our forum is an opportunity to reflect on the subject of energy mixes, and the way in which these development drivers reflect the stakeholder configuration. During each of humanity's energy eras several energies have been used, with a so-called "dominant" energy in the mix (Jarrige, Vrignon 2020): was this really the case, and according to which criteria (private or common interest, economic weight in a market)? In successive transitions, have there not been more complex energy mixes? Establishing the existence of the ages of coal, oil, gas and the atom tends to set things in stone, while transitions and the dominance of different energies are more fluid, subject to causes and factors that need to be analyzed. Periods of ebb and flow of the dominant energies, abandoned efforts, and transitions that were expected but did not occur, can be identified during the major energy transitions. For example, oil became more important during the First World War, but was not dominant in the inter-war mix in France, unlike other countries. It is worth reexamining the history of coal, with its full historical and geographical significance.

An insightful reconstruction of the history of these mixes and, more specifically, their long-standing stakeholders, from region to region, from a global, international perspective, would shine a light on this field and help to inform the debate on the history of transitions.

Focus area 2: Men, women and energy transitions

Energy is a consumer product unlike any other. Its function is vital: for traveling, heating and cooking, etc. For a very long time, its share of the household budget was far below expenditure on food, but the weight of energy costs has gradually become predominant. Adopting an approach based on social and cultural history encourages consideration of the leading role of consumers, beyond the sole influence of energy producers in transitions of the mix. This approach draws on cultural history to explain the emergence of certain energy sources in society. “New” energies have been associated with ideas of social, scientific and technical progress. This narrative of modernity still survives, but has been considerably nuanced by historical analysis. Furthermore, the omnipresence of energies in public space, notably through distribution networks, propaganda and advertising, has deeply influenced consumption patterns and practices, as well as social roles, and has disrupted the relationship with energy phenomena.

As energy equipment, practices and choices make their way into the private sphere, they affect gender relationships. Women’s changing roles in the management of energy in the home, and their involvement in choosing the energy system, shed light on all factors affecting energy mixes in societies (Virgili, Mathis, Williot, 2021).

On a cultural level, then, it is important to take consumers’ perceptions of energy use into account: energy has long been apprehended through the ways it is used and consumed. This large-scale distribution of energy has led to the establishment of networks that provide a local service attractive to users. With cars, for example, the increased share of fuel costs in the family budget has finally offset the convenience provided and induced consumers to rationalize their use, so energy poverty is a natural part of this focus area. Examining this question allows us to understand when and in which conditions energy is supplied, while considering that it is an essential resource in society, and leads into the current issue of energy transition for people who cannot afford it.

Focus area 3: the place of public policy

If there is one area in which the study of energy transitions has aroused keen interest, it is government policy, where it has been adopted, shared and applied at every level of public action. For this symposium, the goal of this subject is to restore a historical context to state action, as well as to regional structures and inter-governmental organizations. Whether in the long or shorter term, government policies have demonstrably not been neutral about energy, and have been capable of either strongly incentivizing or discouraging these transitions and guiding users' choices.

Political authorities have sought to direct energy production and use through tax incentives, regulatory frameworks and prescriptive communications. The Geneva example (Paquier, 2018) is a perfect illustration of how local authorities sought to free themselves from coal in favor of hydropower, notably to improve their finances at the end of the 19th century and during the First World War. Examining the history of public policy allows us to view past energy transitions through the prism of thought and action processes that are not necessarily focused on energy, so we also expect contributions that demonstrate the complexity and diversity of public stakeholders in energy transitions.

Focus area 4: The role of business

We also wish to address the role of energy-producing companies in energy transitions, businesses that have developed policies for sustainable development and CSR. Have the businesses been active in these transitions, did they identify them and how have they handled them in the past? What has their voluntary contribution been to environmental challenges and what sort of strategies have they implemented, or not, to succeed? The environmental dimension is very broad here, and cannot be restricted to the institutionalization of the last two decades. Businesses can be considered stakeholders in a public space, but also as organizations subject to internal conflicts. The environmental aspect of energy transitions is worth historicizing, particularly from a corporate viewpoint, distinguishing between what is displayed and what is the subject of strategic debate.

To this should be added the role of powerful federations, whether in coal, liquid or gas hydrocarbons or electricity. Often supported by certain political parties, they have encouraged the development or preservation of particular energy choices. Energy too has its mythology, from the dangers of the mines

to the beauty of hydroelectric dams and the daring of oil prospectors. But this mythology has a counterpoint in a dark legend that taints coal, oil and the atom.

So this focus area is also a reflection on the question of corporate image and representation in society. The propaganda, marketing strategies and advertising campaigns deployed by corporations to explain how they select and use energy raise the question of consumers' freedom of choice (knowledge, opinion, belief). Energy efficiency messaging might, or might not, have influenced their behavior during the energy "crises" or "shocks" characteristic of 20th century history. What arguments have they used to encourage one source of energy rather than another, and how have these arguments been perceived by potential users? To stand out from their competitors, energy companies have worked on their positioning and brand image, notably through sponsoring and patronage, as was the case for ELF with sport.

How to submit papers and the selection process

This symposium is open to everyone: researchers, doctoral students, etc. We are asking for proposals with an explicit historical dimension that can stretch to the present day.

Proposals for papers (no more than 500 words, with 5 key words) accompanied by a CV (covering at least one page), in either French or English, must be addressed to colloque-2024@totalenergies.com by **January 15, 2024**.

Each proposal must include the first and last names of the speaker, and the organization they are attached to, with a brief biography (no more than 250 words). It must also state which focus area/s of the symposium it addresses.

The scientific committee will make a choice, which will be communicated to the future participants in late January 2024. They will then be asked for a more substantial two or three page summary, as well as a PowerPoint presentation. These two final documents must be provided before May 15, 2024.

The symposium will be held in Paris-La Défense on June 13 and 14, 2024. The working languages are French and English (speeches will be translated into French and into English for English speakers). In-person participation is preferred, but video conferences can be considered if necessary.

3 Publications

3.1 Open Access Special Issue on Pervasive petrocultures

Journal of Energy History / Revue d'histoire de l'énergie (JEHRHE) is an online and open access academic journal dedicated to all aspects of the history of energy. The Issue JEHRHE #10 (2023) is a special issue on petroculture. The articles are available via the link: <https://energyhistory.eu/en/issues>

[Pervasive petrocultures: histories, ideas and practices of fossil fuels](#). Edited by Anna Åberg, Kristoffer Ekberg, and Susanna Lidström

Content

- Petrocultures in the making: Oil in 1920s Scandinavian newspapers by Sissel Furuseth
- Creating the conditions for Western European petroculture: The Marshall Plan, the politics of the OEEC, and the transition from coal to oil by Robert Gross, Odinn Melsted, Nicolas Chachereau
- The ubiquity of Royal Dutch Shell in the Netherlands as a case of banal petroculture by Geert Buelens
- Oceanic irrealism. Danish petrofiction below the surface by Karl Emil Rosenbæk
- The endless potentiality: A century and a half of Greek oil aspirations (and what often becomes of them) by Christos Karampatsos, Spyros Tzokas, Giorgos Velegrakis
- Pervasive extractivism: Petroculture and sedimented histories in Sandrine Bessora's Petroleum by Giulia Champion
- "Blue-Eyed Arabs" & the Silver Snake: Alaskan petrocultures and the Trans-Alaska pipeline system by Philip A. Wight

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