

# MEMORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF CRISES IN LATE ANTIQUITY AND THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES (300-900 AD)

MAISON DE L'ORIENT ET  
DE LA MÉDITERRANÉE  
SALLE REINACH

**LYON**  
**23 APRIL**  
**2026**

## Organization

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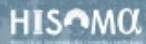
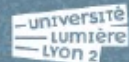
Stefano RICCIONI  
University of Pisa

The workshop "Memory and Historiography of Crises in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages (300-900)" examines how societies of late antiquity and the early medieval world perceived, narrated, and transmitted the memory of crises such as famine, climate change, epidemics, political breakdown, and social transformation. Rather than focusing only on events themselves, it studies their representation: how crises were written about, justified, remembered, omitted, or forgotten. The aim is to shift attention from the event to the discursive, ideological, and cultural processes that shaped texts, images, and post-crisis responses.

The chronological frame of 300-900 is linked to the historiography of the "transformation of the Roman world," a key period of restructuring in Europe and the Mediterranean. Although this framework is less obvious elsewhere, it remains useful for exploring how narratives of crisis circulated across connected regions. At the same time, the memory of crises extends beyond this period into medieval, modern, and contemporary interpretations. The workshop also draws on postcolonial perspectives to avoid projecting European models of decline or transition onto African and Asian contexts, emphasizing instead the plurality of temporalities and historical experiences.

Its originality lies in the dialogue between history, archaeology, philology, and art history. Written sources may be fragmentary or conventional, while material and visual evidence reveals other perceptions and responses. By combining these approaches, the workshop seeks to connect symbolic, social, and economic dimensions often reduced to simple narratives of decline. It also challenges overly literal readings of texts by restoring attention to representation and interpretation, while maintaining dialogue with archaeology, paleoclimatology, genetics, and economic history.

Bringing together scholars from Europe, South America, Asia, and Africa, the meeting aims to create a connected and comparative space for discussion and to lay the foundations for a shared, cross-disciplinary research program on the memory and historiography of crises.



## INTRODUCTION 9h00

Marcelo Candido da Silva (Universidade de São Paulo)

Mathilde Cazeaux (École Normale Supérieure de Lyon)

Stéphane Gioanni (Université Lumière Lyon 2)

Sylvie Joye (Université Paris 1 – Panthéon-Sorbonne)

Umberto Longo (Sapienza Università di Roma)

**"Le crisi nel mondo monastico, la rottura degli insediamenti monastici in seguito alle invasioni longobarde a Farfa"**

Morana Čausević-Bully (Université de Franche-Comté) et Sébastien Bully (CNRS)

**"Les sites ruraux abandonnés"**

Stefano Riccioni (Università Ca' Foscari)

**"La crisi iconoclasta e la reazione dell' Occidente latino. (Immagini da Roma, Ravenna e Venezia)"**

Discussion

Hongnan Liu (South China Normal University)

**"Accumulation et percée : nouveaux progrès de la recherche chinoise sur l'histoire de l'Antiquité tardive européenne"**

Zhongyue Guan (Hainan University)

**"Between Strata and Manuscripts: New Perspectives in the Study of Medieval Chinese History"**

Discussion

EUROPE

ASIA

## LUNCH 12h15-14h00

Marcelo Candido da Silva (Universidade de São Paulo)

**"Describing Famine, Explaining Crisis : Narratives and Social Experience"**

Neri de Barros Almeida (Universidade Estadual de Campinas)

**"The memory of the past in the reaction to environmental crisis"**

Carlos Machado (University of St. Andrews)

**"The Sack of Rome: from crisis to memory"**

Discussion

Olivia Adankpo (Université Grenoble Alpes)

**"Une histoire sans fin? Mémoires et historiographie du déclin du royaume axoumite dans l'espace éthiopien (700-1500)"**

Mathilde Cazeaux (École Normale Supérieure de Lyon)

**"L'Église catholique d'Afrique face aux Vandales (429-484) : lectures de Victor de Vita"**

Discussion

## CONCLUDING ROUND TABLE

END OF THE MEETING 18h00