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**Call for Papers: Workshop on ‘Antiquity and the Anthropocene’**

**This event is made possible thanks to the generous funding from the UCD Humanities Institute and College of Arts and Humanities Interdisciplinary Research Grant**

**Venue**: University College Dublin, 22–23 May 2020

**Keynote speaker**: Professor Kyle Harper, University of Oklahoma

**Abstract**: In the last two decades the current, unprecedented environmental crisis has led many scholars to rethink radically the anthropocentric model of political entities centred on the interactions between ideology, politics, economics and the military. Instead, the focal role played by nature and the environment in shaping social and political power is becoming increasingly recognised. At the same time scientific validation of the Anthropocene, a new geological epoch that is functionally and stratigraphically distinct from the Holocene (11,700 BCE–present day), dramatically confirms the overwhelming and irreversible influence that human activities have on our planet and shows how we humans are a force of nature ourselves. The start-date of this new epoch is highly debatable (was it the Neolithic Agricultural Revolution? The Industrial Revolution?) and has strong political implications (e.g. a very early date can be used to normalise environmental change).

Building on this environment-human interdependency debate, this workshop will look back at the environmental impact of some of the largest power networks of the past, including ancient empires, with the aim of re-examining ancient perceptions of nature, power, and power over nature to help us better understand our present situation. By offering a lively and challenging setting for discussion to international scholars, nature writers, and artists, the workshop will foster new approaches to explain the relationship between human societies and their natural environments, providing a novel interpretative framework for current and past environmental crises. This event aims to start a conversation that will produce an interdisciplinary response to the most important issue of our time.

**Call for papers and artworks**: We invite paper submissions on any aspect related to the key topics of this event (see below). Artists and writers are also encouraged to respond to these topics through various media (paintings, poetry, videos, etc.) that will be displayed in a small, public-facing exhibition in one of Dublin’s local museums. The first day of the Workshop will feature paper panels focused on the key topics, while the opening of the public exhibition will occur on the afternoon of the second day.

Abstracts of max. 250 words for a 25-minute presentation should be sent to [antiquityanthropoceneUCD@gmail.com](mailto:antiquityanthropoceneUCD@gmail.com) by **Monday 2March 2020**. Visual artworks (digital images or photographs in high resolution), short stories, and poetry should be accompanied by a brief commentary (max. 250 words). The selected contributions will automatically be considered for publication in a special issue of an open-access journal.

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

• Environmental crises in antiquity

• Impact of ancient empires

• Impact of urbanisation, production, and consumption

• Impact of human agglomeration and population growth

• Technology and nature

• Architecture/infrastructure and the environment

* Art and nature

• Taming/adapting the wilderness

• Fear of nature

* Power over nature

• Plant and animal agency

• Natural resources: exploitation and economics

• ‘De-naturing’, modification of the natural

• Comparative studies: past and present patterns

We look forward to receiving your submissions!

The organisers:

Dr Giacomo Savani (UCD)

Dr Matthew J. Mandich (ISAR)

Dr Amanda Kelly (UCD)