

Ground-breaking Experience Past Landscapes in Grains and Pixels

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National Museum of Scotland
Chambers Street
Edinburgh

Ground-breaking Experience Past Landscapes in Grains and Pixels

Paul Adderley • Michael Young

For further information please contact:

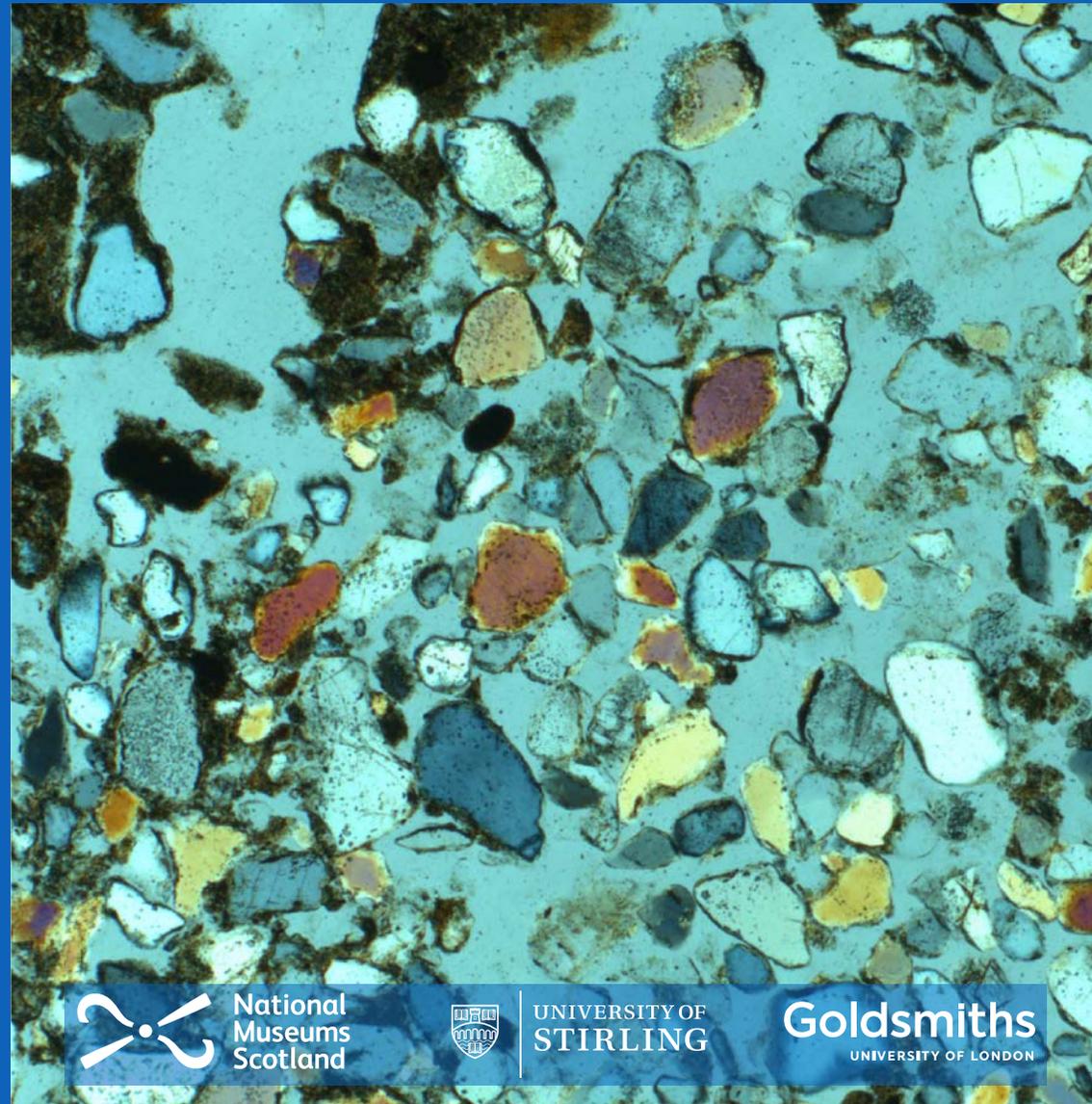
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Dr Adderley is the RCUK Academic Fellow in
Geoarchaeology and Environmental History at
the University of Stirling. His research develops
understandings of past landscapes using a
variety of novel scientific methods.

Dr Young is a Lecturer in Music at Goldsmiths
College, University of London. His research
explores computer-based generative and
interactive processes for a range of sound
media.



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Landscapes reflect the lives and histories of the people who live in them. Scientific analysis of the soil can be used to examine how people lived in the past and provide lessons for future management of landscapes in extreme or fragile environments.



The Sahel in Africa is an area at the fringe of the Sahara desert. It is one of the world's most marginal environments yet is home to over 50 million people. With a dry season lasting eight months of the year and unreliable rainfall, survival is hard for farming communities. Climate change is keenly felt in the Sahel. Understanding how people managed this landscape during past periods of climate change is essential in developing successful responses to future changes.



Excavations in Lake Chad basin, North East Nigeria

Soils can store information recording the way people have affected the land over thousands of years. Microscopic fragments of different objects found in the soil can tell us about past landscapes. The colour, size and number of fragments offer further clues about the management of landscapes.

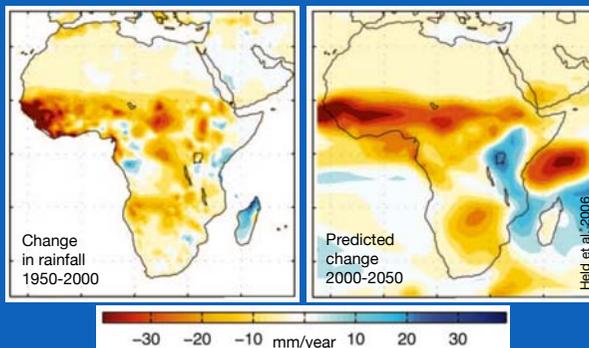


Burnt materials indicate settlement of Lake Chad basin 4000 years ago

Lake levels reflect changing climate



Computer models predict dramatic changes in climate



New means of understanding past landscapes - The latest advances in visual and sonic technologies allow us to illuminate and make audible these ancient landscapes. In this unique installation, a computer explores and represents nearly 10,000 years of soil records, revealing them in different colours and perspectives. Sounds of the Sahel, and sounds made afresh are recalled and shaped by the computer using scientific information taken from the soil itself.

We invite you to become part of the shifting scenes of the Sahel in image and sound and reflect upon its presence and history...