

SSCIP 2025

Children and Climate Change

17th Annual Conference of the Society for the Study of Childhood in the Past

ABSTRACT BOOK



SSCIP2025

Children and Climate Change

Aarhus 25th-27th June

25th-27th June 2025

Aarhus, Denmark

Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS),
buildings 1630-1632, Høegh-Guldbergs Gade 6B

<https://conferences.au.dk/sscip-2025>

This conference is sponsored by the Aarhus University Research Foundation in collaboration with the School of Culture and Society, Aarhus University.

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SCHOOL OF CULTURE AND SOCIETY
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SSCIP2025

Children and Climate Change

Aarhus 25th-27th June

Conference programme

DAY 1: Wednesday June 25th

09:00 09:30 Registration and coffee

09:30 10:30 **Keynote:** Sheina Lew-Levy

10:30 11:00 Morning coffee

11:00 12:00 **Session 1: Toys and art**

11:00 **Izzy Wisher & Felix Riede** - *Children as Playful Artists: Implications for Understanding Artistic Behaviours in the Upper Palaeolithic*

11:20 **Mary Clare Martin** - *Creativity, Autonomy and Agency: Children Making their Own Toys in the Twentieth Century*

11:40 **Majken Astrup** - *Skalk Junior – A Children’s Magazine on the Past*

12:00 13:00 Lunch

13:00 15:00 **Session 2: Climate and children**

13:00 **Corinne Feuillatre et al.** - *Revealing Apocalypse: Stable Light Isotope Analysis, Drought, Famine and Migration in 20th Century Sudan*

13:20 **Csilla Libor et al.** - *„... for Better or Worse...” Life in the Carpathian Basin During two Climate Change Eras*

13:40 **Daria Loznjak Dizdar** - *Children in River Confluence Environments: Sustainability, Change, Heritage*

14:00 14:10 Short break

14:10 14:50 **Session 3: Agency**

14:10 **Sanna Lipkin** - *The everyday Life and Social Bonds of Karelian Refugee Children in Early 20th-Century Finland*

14:30 **Sascha Bjerg Bøgebjerg** & Helle Strandgaard Jensen - *KidLink: Children's*

Agency on the New Information Superhighway

14:50 15:00 Afternoon tea and coffee

15:00 17:00 Workshop: **Videnskabsklubben**

DAY 2: Thursday June 26th

09:00 10:30 **Session 4: Death**

09:00 **Javier Salcines-Montaña & Teresa Fernández-Crespo** - *Unlocking*

Emotions and Attitudes towards Infant Death in Late Bronze and Iron Age

Communities of North-Central Iberia

09:20 **Sonia López-Chamizo & Elías Brossoise** - *Absent Yet Central: Children,*

Ritual Invisibility and Social Exclusion in the Necropolis of the Bay of

Málaga (9th c. BCE – 2nd c. CE)

09:40 **Povilas Blaževičius & Giedrė Piličiauskienė** - *"It's a Dangerous World: A*

Little One Needs Many Friends" – Animal Remains in Children's Graves from

Prehistoric and Medieval Lithuania

10:00 **Eileen Murphy & Colm Donnelly** - *Interpreting Juvenile Violent Death in*

Medieval Ireland

10:30 11:00 Morning coffee

11:00 12:00 **Keynote:** Kristine Alexander

12:00 13:00 Lunch

13:00 14:00 **Session 5: Life**

13:00 **Selene Rodríguez-Caraballo** - *Won't Somebody Please Think of the*

Children?!?

13:20 **Creighton Avery** - *Pubertal Timing in Velia: Considering Biological and Social Changes*

13:40 **Marta García-Barreiro et al.** - *Characterising a Possible Case of Pre-Adolescent Dysplasia: A Multi-Proxy Approach*

14:00 14:10 Short break

14:10 14:50 **Session 6: Health**

14:10 **Alba Navarro-Pérez et al.** - *Analysis of Dental Microwear Patterns in the Non-Adult Population of the Castillejo del Bonete Site (Terrinches, Spain)*

14:30 **Marta Fernández-Viejo et al.** - *Tiled Resting Places: Infant Burials and Health Insights from Prado Guadaña (Valladolid, NW Spain)*

14:50 15:10 Final words

15:10 15:30 Afternoon tea and coffee

15:30 17:30 Workshop: **Julia Beaumont & Corinne Feuillatre** - *Identifying Childhood Stress: Changes in the Isotope Ratios in Incremental Tissues*

19:00 Conference dinner

DAY 3: Friday June 27th

Volunteer excursions to *Den Gamle By* and *Moesgaard* (free admission for delegates)

Moesgaard is a state-of-the-art culture historical museums lying in beautiful surroundings next to the old manor house and with forest and beach just a short walk away. A little outside of Aarhus, bus 18 will take you straight from Aarhus central station to the foot of the museum, the last stop on the route. See more here: <https://www.moesgaardmuseum.dk/en/>

Den Gamle By (the Old Town) is an open-air museum in the heart of Aarhus. Here you can travel through Danish history from the early 1900s to present day, showing how life has been like through time. See more here: <https://www.dengamleby.dk/en/>

Session 1: Toys and art

Children as Playful Artists: Implications for Understanding Artistic Behaviours in the Upper Palaeolithic

Izzy Wisher & Felix Riede

Children's agential behaviours in the archaeological record have often been overlooked. In Upper Palaeolithic art, there have been concerted efforts to visualise children's contributions through the analysis of anatomical measurements of traces produced by the hands or fingers. While these have successfully demonstrated children were often engaging in artistic behaviours, the dependency on anatomical measurements limits the cases for Upper Palaeolithic children's art. In a recent paper (Wisher et al. 2024), we developed a framework that integrated developmental psychological research on children's drawings to identify children's art in the Upper Palaeolithic, based on characteristic features of the marks very young children produce. We applied this to a case study from Las Monedas cave, arguing that the enigmatic *Panel of the Masks* within this cave may have been produced by several young children of different ages between >2-7 years old. Our research further emphasised the intangible dimensions of narrative and play that would have been inherent within Upper Palaeolithic children's art. In this talk, we build from this paper to discuss the implications of our framework for appreciating the importance of children's roles in the development of artistic behaviours, and how the playful nature of children's art elucidates new insights into these deeply cultural behaviours.

Creativity, Autonomy and Agency: Children making their own toys in the twentieth century

Mary Clare Martin

Much of the history of toys has focused on elites or on collectors' items, dictated by the survival of the most durable items. This paper links the history of toys and play with sustainability and therefore has implications for addressing climate change. It will focus on children's ingenuity and resilience in making their own toys, and the development of skill. It therefore moves away from much toy history to the autonomy and agency of children in creating their own play cultures and materials. This aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Goals 11, 4, 12 and 10. Moreover, it challenges the frequent narrative of decline. Such toys and play culture were manifest within the last hundred years, not only

the distant past. The Girl Guide magazines of the early twentieth century illustrate the huge amount of skill expected of quite young children (*Girl Guides Gazette*, 1914 onwards). Anthropologists focus on the ways children in North Africa make their own toys (Rossie, 2013), while in New Guinea, children's culture included making wheeled toys with nuts and sticks, and in South Africa, toys with wire from fences. In the UK, Jackie Marsh and Julia Bishop argued that whereas children in the 1950s made many playthings, "contemporary children do not play with homemade toys" (2011/2012, p. 11). Yet in my own unpublished research from 2015-16, younger schoolchildren responded that they made toys out of boxes, whereas older children recalled making boomerangs and "chatterboxes" at primary school. The paper will argue that sharing global practices of child toy creation can enhance a culture of sustainable and co-created toys.

Skalk Junior – a children's magazine on the past

Majken Astrup

How do you present the past for children? How do you make it relevant and alive? How do you get around central aspects without making everything too complicated? How do you engage your reader? And how do you create a singular focus in a world of details? Those are some of the considerations around creating Skalk Junior. Skalk Junior is a Danish children's magazine communicating archeology and history for children aged 8-13. The purpose is to provide an exciting and fascinating entrance to the past. Give the readers a stronger historical conscience and a broader perspective on events taking place in the present. The presenter will take you into the editorial suite. Show you how articles are selected, edited and layouted with a single focus on making the past both delighting, fascinating, horrifying, enlightening and of course – present.

Session 2: Climate and children

Revealing apocalypse: stable light isotope analysis, drought, famine and migration in 20th century Sudan

Corinne Feuillatre, Julia Beaumont, Hannah Koon & Fadil Elamin

Sudan has experienced repeated devastating droughts in recent history, which have led to extreme hardships for the people, including severe hunger crises and extensive population displacements away from the most severely affected regions. The molecular disturbances which result from important dietary or environmental shifts or metabolic stresses experienced by a person are recorded in dental tissues during their formation from infancy into early adulthood, providing a valuable source of evidence to help map major life events such as famine, disease or migration in developing children. The nitrogen and carbon stable isotope composition of a person's tissues is shaped by the type of food they eat, the environment they live in, and the physiological stress they suffer, and droughts have the potential to influence all three of these aspects of a person's life. Sequential isotope ratio analysis of dentine collagen therefore offers the prospect of identifying climatic disasters such as droughts and impacts of such environmental changes on the lives of the most sensitive and vulnerable in a society: children. This paper presents sequential nitrogen and carbon stable isotope ratios ($\delta^{15}\text{N}$ and $\delta^{13}\text{C}$) from the wisdom teeth of modern sudanese individuals against the known historical environment in the region to illustrate how major climatic disasters are recorded in tooth-dentine.

„... for better or worse...” Life in the Carpathian Basin during two climate change eras

Csilla Libor, Katalin Gyenesei, Zita Hrabák, Anna Török-Botyánszki & Szabolcs Cifra

Over the last 3,000 years, climatic changes have intensified compared to the earlier part of the Holocene, significantly leaving a profound mark on both the environment and human communities. Traditionally, these changes have been analyzed regarding subsistence strategies, settlement patterns, and cultural expressions, while bioarchaeological approaches have gained prominence in the past two decades. This study aims to explore the differences observed in populations during two critical climate deterioration events, with a particular focus on children. The first period of interest starts with the '2.8 ka Event,' which roughly aligns with the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age in the

Carpathian Basin. This era is characterized by a wetter and colder climate, during which a more mobile lifestyle spread across the vast Steppe, including its westernmost area, the Great Hungarian Plain (GHP). Consequently, new cultural groups appeared in the GHP, such as the Mezőcsát and Vekerzug. The second focal point of our study concerns the remains of medieval children, particularly about the phenomenon known as the Little Ice Age, which struck Europe in the 14th century. This climatic event had a profound impact on the nutrition and health status of the populations, with children serving as the most immediate indicators of these changes. Our research is based on archaeological, paleodemographic, morphological, and paleopathological analyses of Iron Age and Middle Age burials from the western and central parts of the Carpathian Basin.

Children in river confluence environments: sustainability, change, heritage

Daria Loznjak Dizdar

Traces of children from the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (1400 – 350 BC) in the southern Carpathian Basin have been recorded in various archaeological contexts and environments. Palaeoenvironmental and climate studies have not been extensively conducted at micro-locations, but existing models for the broader area suggest that the period after 1050 BC was drier. Evidence of children and their activities has been discovered in Late Bronze and Early Iron Age settlements. These were lowland settlements, some of which appear to have been inhabited during dry periods. The study of children in their growing environments is supported by diverse types of data (types of dwellings, zooarchaeological data, various archaeological contexts). Archaeological traces reflect their growing up near streams or rivers and interacting with nature and animals. Children learned self-sustainability while growing up and assisting in household activities. Tradition and heritage were passed down through generations, as seen in funerary practices at long-period cemeteries. In addition to transmitting knowledge, new generations introduced changes and innovations into various everyday processes. These themes will be examined diachronically across different sites along the Drava, Sava, and Danube rivers in the southern Carpathian Basin during the period from approximately 1400 to 700 BC.

Session 3: Agency

The everyday life and social bonds of Karelian refugee children in early 20th-century Finland

Sanna Lipkin

Armed conflicts awake fears and concerns, affecting the lives of individuals, groups, and societies, and creating both individual and cultural coping strategies. Strong social bonds are crucial in times of crisis. The 1910s and 1920s saw conflict in Viena Karelia, now part of the Karelian Republic in Russia. After the October Revolution in 1917, the Allies intervened in the Russian Civil War, with the British Royal Navy's Archangel campaign (1918–1919) fighting against the Bolsheviks. War and starvation forced about 10,000 Karelians to flee to Finland between 1919 and 1923. Despite Finland's poverty, refugees were cared for, and children were educated in about 15 boarding schools, mainly in northern and eastern Finland. However, experiences in boarding schools can be difficult, with transgenerational effects including loss of language and culture, psychological trauma, depression, anxiety, disrupted family structures and parenting practices, and collective trauma manifested in substance abuse, violence, and loneliness that continue to affect future generations. The boarding school of Maikkula in Oulu was established in old military buildings and a prison. Other schools, like Hyrynsalmi, were also in poor condition. Most children lived in the schools while their parents worked elsewhere. They were taught in Finnish, leading to the loss of the Karelian language. Schools were isolated, and Karelians were otherwise segregated from Finns. Some downplayed their cultural and ethnic identities. Through photographs, museum artefact collections, and documentary sources, this poster will consider the everyday life and social bonds of children who lived in Karelian refugee schools.

KidLink: Children's Agency on the New Information Superhighway

Sascha Bjerg Bøgebjerg & Helle Strandgaard Jensen

This paper uses an empirical exploration of the 1990s KidLink project as a starting point for theoretical explorations on how to research children's agency during the first years of the World Wide Web. In 1990, the Norwegian computer journalist Odd de Presno invented the KidLink project to connect children aged 10-15 from all over the world. During the first year, children from three countries participated: Norway, Canada and the USA, and

corresponded via mailing lists. The following year, more than 2600 children from 32 countries participated (Wheeler 1995), and the project continued to grow during the 1990s. Schools drove the project idea and implementation, but children were prompted to use the setting to socialise outside of firm educational boundaries. When the project joined the World Wide Web in 1995 and more homes were connected to the Internet, the possibility for leisure time use further expanded. For this analysis, we will analyse (1) the Kidlink project framework and how it positioned its participants as children with regard to the agency they were encouraged to enact and (2) the interactions that took place on the different websites. For definitions and discussions of children's agency, we will draw upon recent work and discussions by childhood historians, e.g. Tisdall (2022) and Olsen et al. (2024), but also on recent work within the field of digital interculturality (Lenehan 2024). The sources for our analysis consist of a mixture of printed materials and archived web pages.

Session 4: Death

Unlocking emotions and attitudes towards infant death in Late Bronze and Iron Age communities of north-central Iberia

Javier Salcines-Montaña & Teresa Fernández-Crespo

During the Late Bronze and Iron Ages, cremation of corpses and deposition of the resulting remains in necropolises outside villages was the main funerary practice in north-central Iberia. However, funerary practices also included burial of infant individuals in domestic contexts. This differential treatment, together with the exploration of other archaeological attitudes towards infant death, allows the reconstruction of the social value of those individuals and the feelings that may have surfaced in families after their premature loss. It has been traditionally proposed that because infant mortality was high in the past, parents were not emotionally attached. However, there is extended evidence of communities with high infant mortality and very involved mourning rituals for infants, although simpler mortuary treatments and segregation of burials were frequent. This may be case of our study context. Burials within houses have been seen as evidence of infants having limited social relationships beyond the immediate family. However, they can also reflect a parental desire for special protection, particularly if existential anxieties existed regarding the negative fate of the infant's soul, deprived of a normative transition to afterlife. The care and attention into preparing infants' bodies, graves and grave goods deposited during funerary rituals may have acted as a substitute for the care that would have been provided had they lived. We pose that differential funerary rituals of infants are fundamental expressions of parental distress and emotions, channeling feelings and memorability beyond dominant funerary attitudes and helping generate strong affective bonds that would have provided emotional stability.

Absent Yet Central: Children, Ritual Invisibility and Social Exclusion in the Necropoleis of the Bay of Málaga (9th c. BCE – 2nd c. CE)

Sonia López-Chamizo & Elías Brossoise

In the funerary record of the Bay of Málaga, children are strikingly underrepresented. Rather than interpreting this absence as a simple gap in data, this paper argues that the invisibility of infants and children within necropoleis is itself a cultural decision—one that reveals the

deep structures of social differentiation, memory, and ritual belonging in Phoenician-Punic and early Roman contexts. One exceptional context—the Campos Elíseos cemetery—offers a rare counterpoint. Here, a higher-than-average number of children and subadults appear in burial contexts associated with disease, marginality, and altered ritual practices. This suggests that funerary visibility for children emerged primarily under conditions of societal stress, when normative scripts of exclusion were disrupted by moments of crisis—whether medical, social, or symbolic. By analyzing spatial distribution, funerary architecture, and the treatment of bodies and objects, this paper explores how ritual systems include or exclude individuals not simply by age, but by their position within the social and ritual order. It proposes that absence is not a passive phenomenon, but an active strategy of silencing. Addressing the silent spaces of childhood in mortuary landscapes, this work contributes to broader debates on age, agency, and inequality in past societies—and highlights the interpretive power of absence for understanding how crisis can rupture, reconfigure, or momentarily invert the social order.

"It's a Dangerous World: A Little One Needs Many Friends" – Animal Remains in Children's Graves from Prehistoric and Medieval Lithuania

Povilas Blaževičius & Giedrė Piličiauskienė

Relationships between children and animals have always been important – this is evident even today and is also supported by ethnographic material. Prehistoric times are no exception, although we have significantly less information about child–animal relationships from that period. In Lithuania, some of the most significant sources illustrating these connections are burial monuments. Animal skeletons or their parts found in cemeteries offer at least a glimpse into the subtle and multilayered interactions between children and animals. The earliest known examples come from the Subneolithic Donkalnis burial site, where a grave dated to 4300 BCE, belonging to two children, contained as grave goods 45 pendants made from the teeth of wild game animals, mostly aurochs and red deer. In later periods – from the Roman era to the late Middle Ages – a regional tradition of burying horses with the deceased becomes evident in children's graves. Interestingly, in the 6th–7th centuries, children were sometimes buried with foals. Meanwhile, the remains of dogs and even partridges appear in children's graves from the 12th–14th centuries, just before or slightly after the transition from paganism to Christianity. In addition to these finds, our understanding of child–animal relationships in both the world of the living and the dead is enriched by grave goods such as pendants made from hare and marten teeth or bear claws. In this presentation, by analyzing zooarchaeological data, we aim to gain deeper

insight into this fascinating but still underexplored topic of child–animal relationships in prehistoric Lithuania.

Interpreting Juvenile Violent Death in Medieval Ireland

Eileen Murphy & Colm Donnelly

The paper will review the evidence for violent death – as evidenced by weapon injuries in the human skeletal remains of biologically immature individuals – recovered from a diversity of sites across Medieval Ireland. An osteobiographical approach will be used to reconstruct the cause and manner of death of these individuals. The archaeological context of each deposition will also be reviewed to aid with the interpretation of these discoveries. The assignation of the status of ‘child’ on young people of the past is complex and problematic. To address this situation, data from contemporary historical sources, such as the Brehon law tracts, will be assessed for insights on societal attitudes towards biologically immature individuals across the life course. This approach should enable differentiation between the young who died violently as a result of their own agency (i.e, potential warriors or soldiers); those who may have been victims, caught up in larger socio-political conflicts (i.e., the victims of military attacks), or those whose remains are suggestive of more complex acts of performative violence (i.e., hostages). The paper will attempt to identify and assess the power dynamics at play across the life course of these young individuals and how they may have been viewed within society.

Session 5: Life

Won't somebody please think of the children?!?

Selene Rodríguez-Caraballo

The Canary Islands are located in the Atlantic Ocean and are the only archipelago in Macaronesia populated before the arrival of European settlers, by populations of North African origin who arrived around the first century. Until now, childhood has been addressed in some anthropological studies, but it has not been explored in depth from the perspective of childhood archaeology. Therefore, we aim to present a comprehensive study of aboriginal Canarian childhood, conducted through the study of bioanthropological remains, ceramics, and documentary records. To this end, we have studied approximately one hundred individual children, fingerprints found on some ceramic pieces, and the documentary record of chronicles. The result has provided an initial categorization of what aboriginal childhood was and how it must have been structured from the gestation of individuals to their integration into the island community.

Pubertal timing in Velia: Considering Biological and Social Changes

Creighton Avery

Puberty is typically viewed as a biological process, but it also serves as a marker of social age in many contexts, as individuals transition from socially constructed categories of childhood to adulthood. In past populations, where chronological age may not have served as an important marker, physical age, including pubertal status, may have indicated one's ability to begin working independently, marry, or start a family. The current research examines sex-specific patterns of pubertal timing in Roman Velia (1st-2nd century CE), to better understand the timing of these physical transitions, and possible implications for social age changes in the Roman Empire. To assess pubertal timing at Velia, osteological age and sex estimates were completed, including peptide analysis of amelogenin to assess biological sex in pre- and peri-pubertal individuals. All individuals aged 8 to 25 with at least three indicators of pubertal timing were included in the analysis, resulting in a sample size of 29 individuals (12 males and 17 females). Results demonstrate that males experienced puberty between 13 and 18, while females experienced puberty between 14 and 18 years of age; PHV also occurred at similar ages between sex-based groups. Clinically, females typically experience PHV at a younger average age than males, however, that pattern was

not directly observed at Velia. Rather, females at Velia may have experienced a delayed or extended period of puberty compared to other Roman contexts, suggesting sex-specific patterns of biological, and possibly social changes, at the port city.

Characterising a possible case of pre-adolescent dysplasia: a multi-proxy approach

Marta García-Barreiro, Julia Muñoz-Guarinos, Sonia Díaz-Navarro, Laura Rodríguez, Jose Miguel Carretero & Rebeca García-González

Developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH) is a developmental defect that arises during infancy and prevents the normal articulation between the acetabulum and the femoral head. Its etiology is unknown, but both genetic and environmental factors influence the progression of this malformation. This condition encompasses a spectrum from mild acetabular dysplasia to subluxation and dislocation. Thus, the main aim of this study is to characterise a possible case of pre-adolescent dysplasia from a multi-proxy approach. The remains under study belong to a male individual aged 11–12 years-old from the medieval osteological collection of San Pablo (Burgos, Spain). It presents a right unilateral dysplasia with visible malformation in the right coxal and proximal femur. Additionally, the tibia and talus have been included in the analysis. The methodology includes the study of cross-sections, 3D geometric morphometrics, and the calculation of femoral angles. The results revealed differences in the pattern of bone deposition and reabsorption in the right ilium, ischium, and proximal femur, as well as in the morphology of their sections. In addition, the difference in the bicondylar angles shows a different arrangement of the right femur, compensation also visible in the cross-sections of the left tibia. Probably for this compensation, the 3D geometric morphometrics of the astragali reveal no morphological differences when compared to other individuals of a similar age. The results provide valuable insights into a poorly documented pathological process and its potential impact on the individual's cultural and socioeconomic context, including caregiving needs and activity limitations.

Session 6: Health

Analysis of dental microwear patterns in the non-adult population of the Castillejo del Bonete site (Terrinches, Spain)

Alba Navarro-Pérez, Luis Benítez de Lugo-Enrich, Domingo C. Salazar-García & Rebeca García-González

Castillejo del Bonete (CB) is a sacred site located in Castilla-La Mancha, Spain, built within a natural cave and used as a burial place during the transition from the third to the second millennium cal BC. A minimum of 80 individuals were interred at the site, 28 of whom are non-adults. This burial period at CB coincides with an increase in social complexity. Since dental microwear analysis is a well-established method for characterizing subsistence strategies, cultural behaviors, and social organization, it can be employed to assess this process of increasing social complexity. The main objective of this study is to establish the dental wear pattern in fully erupted deciduous molars from CB, with particular attention to the introduction of foods into children's diets and the possible differences, both in the products and their preparation, compared to the adult population. To this end, the buccal surfaces of 10 upper first deciduous molars, 9 lower first deciduous molars, 10 upper second deciduous molars, and 11 lower second deciduous molars were analyzed. For the wear analysis, digitized micrographs were taken at a 100× magnification, measuring the number, length, and angles of all scratches. This study seeks to improve our understanding of the relationship between dental microwear patterns in deciduous teeth, the introduction of foods into children's diets, food processing techniques, and their differences from the usual patterns in the adult population. In doing so, it aims to shed light on the experiences of childhood in late prehistoric populations.

Tiled Resting Places: Infant Burials and Health Insights from Prado Guadaña (Valladolid, NW Spain)

Marta Fernández-Viejo, Laura Rodríguez, Sonia Díaz-Navarro, José Miguel Carretero & Rebeca García-González

The necropolis of Prado Guadaña (northern Iberian Peninsula) offers a continuous funerary sequence from the Hispano-Visigothic to medieval periods (7th–13th centuries CE), providing key insights into demographic dynamics and mortuary traditions during Iberia's transition from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages. Infant burials are a central focus, with

non-adults comprising 53% of the sample, notably perinatal individuals and infants. This overrepresentation highlights high infant mortality rates, while the frequent use of tegulae as grave coverings suggests a specific funerary treatment for the youngest. This study presents a palaeodemographic analysis based on life tables and mortality coefficients, alongside an evaluation of health and disease through pathological markers. By assessing evidence of metabolic, traumatic, and infectious conditions, we reconstruct the health status of the most vulnerable population segment and identify patterns of infant morbidity and mortality. Findings include individuals showing signs of vitamin deficiencies and infectious diseases, offering insights into nutrition, living conditions, and care practices in rural medieval communities. Notably, traumatic lesions in some perinatal remains raise the possibility of infanticide. The intersection of high mortality, pathological evidence, and distinctive burial practices reflects societal responses to childhood vulnerability. This research contributes to broader discussions on health, nutrition, and mortuary customs during a pivotal but underexplored historical transition, offering a bioarchaeological perspective on the lived experiences of the youngest members of past communities.

Workshop

Identifying childhood stress: changes in the isotope ratios in incremental tissues

Julia Beaumont & Corinne Feuillatre

Children in any population are a vulnerable group. They are first to be affected by nutritional stress, whether through lack of access to food or because they are subjected to physiological demands that require higher nutrition (such as famine, chronic illnesses, growth, physical demands on their bodies). The temporal resolution achievable using isotope ratios in incremental tissues (dentine, hair, fingernails) has allowed us to see that the profiles produced reflect short-term changes in diet and physiology which were previously invisible.

This workshop will use real data from incremental tissues to allow discussions around potential differences between dietary changes and the effects of environmental changes such as heat stress, famine and nutritional deprivation. Real data from Black Death cemeteries will be included to investigate the effect of the Little Ice Age on children growing up during this period. Modern and archaeological individuals will be included in the data sets and will address challenges surrounding the use of bone and permanent teeth rather than deciduous teeth and hair/fingernail.

We encourage participants to bring along any data they would like to interpret during the workshop.