

## Editorial

Before the advent of instrumental records, up to 20 observations a day were carried out at specific sites, by the same observer, following defined rules. Despite this plethora of data, many scientists are of the opinion that observations made before the instrumental period are "subjective" and less reliable than natural proxies. But these data were collected by very experienced scientists and observers. Once calibrated and verified in the present, the data are precise and have a spatiotemporal resolution unmatched by any other climate proxy data. They are probably the best data source for the reconstruction of climatic state parameters in continental areas for the period between 1500 and 1850. In addition, a world-wide data base of daily information is being put together for the worlds major oceanic areas from naval log-books (project CLIWOC). Natural disasters are a major source of societal concern in the context of climatic change. However, the record of instrumental measurements is too short to explore natural patterns of disasters. This also holds for investigations into societal vulnerability. In this context, documentary evidence is invaluable. This issue of *PAGES News* mirrors the fact that investigations on documentary data are unevenly distributed on the globe. On one hand, this distribution is related to the abundance and availability of the data sources, which, in China go back for several thousand and in Europe for several hundred years. On the other hand, this kind of research has until recently been somewhat neglected in the Americas, where written sources begin with the European settlement. In Australia and in Africa records are almost absent. Curiously, hardly any research has been devoted to the Islamic world, despite its long standing tradition of keeping annals. Dealing with documentary data requires a historian's skills. Scientists tend to overlook the pitfalls inherent in this data and are usually not familiar with old languages, institutions and hand-writing. On the other hand scientists are needed for statistical analysis and climatological interpretation of the data. Worldwide, many thousand volumes with daily observations exist, but have not yet been analyzed for their climatic information. Let's get to work!

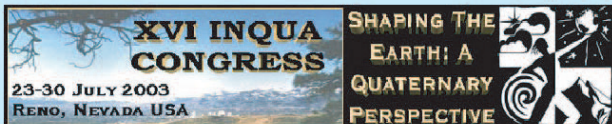
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## Conferences



**More Information:**

[http://www.inqua2003.dri.edu/inqua\\_home.htm](http://www.inqua2003.dri.edu/inqua_home.htm)

**Contact:**

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**Special PAGES Session on:  
Human-environment interactions: Past and present**

Isabelle Larocque ([larocque@pages.unibe.ch](mailto:larocque@pages.unibe.ch)), Rick Battarbee, John Dearing

**Important Deadlines:**

March 31: Last day for Abstract submission

July 11: Last Day for Online Registration



**PAGES**  
PAST GLOBAL CHANGES



### Achieving Climate Predictability Using Paleoclimate Data

**11-16 October 2003 - San Feliu de Guixols, Spain**

Chair: Thomas Stocker, University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland

Vice-Chair: Martin Visbeck, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, Palisades

#### Short Synopsis:

This conference is the second of a series with the goal to bring closer together two research communities investigating natural climate variability and change on decadal to century time scales. The core project of the World Climate Research Program WCRP, CLIVAR (Climate Variability and Predictability) focuses mainly on the last 150 years during which there is access to instrumental data. The longer time perspective of climate variability is provided by PAGES (Past Global Changes), a core project of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP). This EURESCO conference will be a unique opportunity to confront researchers of past changes with the latest dynamical concepts of climate variability as obtained from the observational record. Conversely, multi-decadal and centennial variability hinted at in modern observations can be assessed in the light of high-resolution paleoclimatic records.

**Further Information:**

<http://www.pages.unibe.ch/calendar/2003/euresco.html>