



### 23<sup>rd</sup> Paleopathology Association European Meeting

After two years of delays caused by the covid-19 pandemic, the 23<sup>rd</sup> European Meeting of the Paleopathology Association was held in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, on August 25–29, 2022. The conference, organized by Vilnius University, took place in Radisson Blu Hotel Lietuva and was held as a hybrid event, which provided the possibility either in person or online participation, aiming to meet the needs of colleagues from Europe as well as participants from the rest of the world. The central theme of the conference was "Paleopathology and its impact on medicine and society", focusing on the importance of both scientific achievement and public outreach.

The Meeting was unofficially opened on the evening of 25<sup>th</sup> August with a welcome reception, which took place in the Bastion of the Vilnius defensive wall and presented a great opportunity to meet colleagues not only from Europe but also from other continents. Drinks and delicious snacks were served throughout the evening. The next morning, the meeting was started officially with speeches of Jūras Banys, President of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, Rimvydas Petrauskas, Rector of Vilnius University, and Megan Brickley, President of the Paleopathology Association, all introduced by Rimantas Jankauskas, Chair of the Local Organizing Committee. An interesting surprise was then a musical performance by a band of local physicians.

The opening ceremony was followed by the first invited lecture by Hendrik Poinar, who spoke about time-travelling with ancient aDNA. On the next two conference days, two more invited speakers gave their lectures – Eugénia Cunha focused on the role of paleopathology in the process of identification of human remains and Charlotte Roberts presented a reflection on the topic of the evolution of paleopathology and the importance of focusing on the "here and now" of health and well-being.

The scientific programme of the Meeting offered a total of 147 contributions. Both podium and poster presentations were divided into specialized sessions

dealing with Advances in analytical methods, Paleoparasitology, and Bone paleopathology (while the latter was the most comprehensive). The sessions were complemented by the following thematic symposia: Exploring intersections of diet, health, and disease, Paleoimaging: From the field to the experimental lab and vice versa, Paleopathology, disability and care, Paleopathology and the Stockholm paradigm: Past evidence of climate change and emerging diseases, and These bones of mine: Considering issues on the display of human remains in museums. A summary of all participants' contributions is available in the Abstract book published as No. 26 of *Vilnius University Proceedings*.

A rich social programme was prepared by the organizers. In addition to the aforementioned Welcome Reception, a three-course Conference dinner was served on Saturday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, in La Bohème restaurant. The programme also included an excursion to the Vilnius University Ensemble and Library, and a Vilnius City walking tour guided either by a local (Rimantas Jankauskas) or a foreigner (Dario Piombino-Mascali). The last day of the conference (Monday 29<sup>th</sup> August) was reserved for a trip to Trakai Castle.

The organization of the Meeting was flawless, the same can be said about the weather. It was a perfect opportunity to meet scientists from all over the world, discuss and update each other on research and establish new contacts and cooperations.

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