

Lecture Series

With two lectures and a workshop, the 2016 Fall term was an exciting and dynamic one for the Climate Change and History Research Initiative (CCHRI). Professor Alan Mikhail, Yale University, delivered the first of two CCHRI lectures in November. His talk 'Toward a Global Climate History of the 1780s: Iceland and Egypt' was both an interdisciplinary exploration of the far-reaching impacts of the 1783 Laki eruption and also a thoughtful exercise on how we as historians can weave natural world instability into the history of complex premodern societies. Later in November, Professor Hendrik Dey, Hunter College, gave us an in depth overview of his project on the late antique history of tsunamis at the port of Caesarea Maritima, Israel (pictured). Attendees learned about the many layers of his multidisciplinary work, from textual analysis of reports of tsunamis to the assessment of offshore sediment cores, and how they illuminate each other.



The Fall Palaeoclimate Workshop



In September, we held our second annual palaeoclimate workshop for premodernists. This year the focus was palynology. We were delighted to have Professors Neil Roberts, Plymouth University, and Warren Eastwood, Birmingham University, lead the event. 25 junior scholars (graduate students to assistant professors) took part and over the course of three days tackled a number of issues from the principles of palynology, pollen dispersal and chronology development to the archaeological and palaeoclimate applications of pollen analysis. The concentration was Mediterranean, but Neil and Warren addressed the state of palynology in a number of world regions and introduced attendees to international pollen databases. As following our previous workshop on dendroclimatology, feedback was very positive. One participant wrote: "I can't believe how much I've learned in three days. I looked at a paper last night [about pollen cores] that I had first read two years ago - I understood so much more! Many, many thanks!"

Looking Ahead, the Spring 2017 Colloquium

On 5-6 May, we will convene our third annual multidisciplinary colloquium on the subject of climate change and societal vulnerability and resilience in the Mediterranean region in premodernity: 15 scholars will be in Princeton for the two-day event. This year the meeting will be thoroughly comparative: the ancient and medieval Eastern Mediterranean experience will be contrasted with that of pre-Columbian Latin America. Leading historians, archaeologists and palaeoclimatologists working on one of these two regions are set to take part. Participants include John Bintliff, Vera Candiani, Arlen Chase (who directs excavations at Caracol, Belize, pictured), Dominik Fleitmann, Peregrine Horden, Adam Izdebski, Jürg Luterbacher, Joe Manning, Sturt Manning, Jason Nesbitt, Johannes Preiser-Kapeller, Arlene Rosen, Billie Lee Turner III and Elena Xoplaki. The event is open to the public. Schedule and location will be posted on the CCHRI website in due course.



Looking Ahead, the Spring 2017 Lecture Series

We are proud to announce that three lectures investigating premodern Mediterranean-European environmental change and resilience have been booked for Spring '17: Professor Dagomar Degroot, Georgetown University, 15 February, "Climate Change and Conflict: Perspectives from the Little Ice Age"; Professor Nükhet Varlık, Rutgers University, 15 March, "Climate, Biodiversity, and Epidemics: The Ottoman Plague Experience"; and Professor Emeritus Richard Hoffmann, York University, 26 April, "Climatic Variability and the Fisheries of Medieval and Early Modern Europe". All lectures will be at 4:30 in 211 Dickinson Hall. See you there!

The Project

The CCHRI aims to integrate the research of scholars in all relevant social and natural scientific disciplines in order to evaluate and interpret the evidence for societal resilience to environmental stress and change. The focus is premodern and Eastern Mediterranean but we have provided comparative case studies on Central Eurasia and pre-Columbian Americas. The project has already resulted in several publications by its members, while a special issue of *Human Ecology* is currently in the making. The CCHRI has been funded generously by the Princeton Institute for Interregional and Regional Studies, with additional support from the Center for Collaborative History, the Princeton Environmental Institute, the Program in the Ancient World, The M. Munir Ertegun Foundation for Turkish Studies at Princeton, the Council for the Humanities, and the Seeger Center for Hellenic Studies, with the support of the Stanley J. Seeger Hellenic Fund. For more, visit cchri.princeton.edu.

Looking Forward to the Spring Term!

John Haldon, Lee Mordechai and Tim Newfield