



Shrinking, Sinking, Resurfacing

Small Islands and Natural Hazards in Historical and Current Perspective

Time and Venue: 22 – 24 November 2012
Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society (RCC), Munich

Conveners: Rebecca Hofmann & Uwe Lübken (RCC/ Climates of Migration)

Small islands have often been portrayed as either a place of desire, or as the exact opposite: the epitome of a nearly impossible life, a place where “civilizations” must, almost necessarily, collapse due to the isolation, the limited resource base, and, last but not least, the frequent exposure to natural hazards. Ironically, in a world with a warming climate, rising sea levels, and the likelihood of increasing extreme natural events, these peculiar places have turned into pioneer communities at the forefront of global environmental change. Yet the focus on vulnerability neglects the fact that small island communities have thrived for centuries, often dealing with these challenges successfully. This workshop adds an historical dimension to the discussion and it looks at the complex problem that natural hazards have posed—and still pose—on small islands in a nuanced way.

Thursday 22 November

17:00 Reception at the RCC

Friday 23 November

09:00–09:15 **Introduction**

09:15–10:45 **Small Islands and Natural Hazards**

Chair Carmel Finley (RCC / Oregon State University)

John R. Gillis (Rutgers University)
Islands as Ecotones: Hazards and Opportunities

Ilan Kelman (CICERO, Center for International Climate and Environmental
Research, Oslo)
Island Contributions to Disaster Research

10:45–11:15 **Coffee break**

11:15–12:45 **The Multiplicity of Island Hazards**

Chair Christof Mauch (RCC)

Katrina Lacher (University of Central Oklahoma)
The Island Community of Chenega: Earthquake, Tsunami, Oil Spill . . . What's Next?

Kent Mathewson (Louisiana State University)
Invasive Species as 'Natural Hazards' in Small Island Geographical and
Historical Contexts

12:45–14:00 **Lunch**

14:00–16:00 **Island Vulnerability – Island Resilience**

Chair Ina Richter (RCC/Climates of Migration)

Mike T. Carson (Australian National University), Patrick D. Nunn (University of
New England)
Collapses/Shifts of Island Cultures through Environmental Forcing

Shrabana Datta (RCC/LMU Munich)
St. Martin's Island: An Eco-Disaster Waiting to Happen

Andrea Kiss (University of Szeged)
Floods and Danube Islands in the Late Medieval-Early Modern Period: Case Studies
from the Carpathian Basin

16:00–16:30 **Coffee break**

16:30–18:00 **Extraordinary “Small” Islands**

Chair Karen Oslund (RCC/Towson University)

Justine Walter (University of Leipzig)

Poseidon’s Wrath: The Perception, Interpretation, and Representation of Natural Hazards in Ancient Greece

Timo Myllyntaus (University of Turku)

Coping with a Mega-Disaster on the Most Dangerous Island in Europe: The Laki Eruption in Iceland, 1783–1784

Saturday 24 November

09:00–11:00 **Myths and Memories of Sunken Islands**

Chair Chris Pastore (RCC/University of Montana)

Miklós Kázmér (Eotvos University Budapest)

The Subsidence of a Prehistoric Island: Mythologies and Geologies from the Pacific Ngeruangel Atoll (Co-authors Patrick L. Colin and Danko Taborosi)

Patrick D. Nunn (University of New England)

Vanished and Vanishing Islands

Arne Harms (Free University Berlin)

Leaving Lohachara: On Circuits of Emplacement and Displacement in the Ganges Delta

11:00–11:30 **Coffee break**

11:30–13:00 **The Erosion of Island Life**

Chair Rebecca Hofmann (RCC/Climates of Migration)

Ina Richter (RCC/Climates of Migration)

Sinking Islands and Out-migration in the Chesapeake Bay

Whitney Hoot (Island Research & Education Initiative)

The Abandonment of Sorol: The First Depopulation of a Micronesian Atoll in Modern History (Co-authors Miklós Kázmér and Danko Taboróši)

13:00–14:00 **Lunch break**

14:00–16:00 **How Climate Change Challenges Small Islands ... and Vice Versa**

Chair Uwe Lübken (RCC/Climates of Migration)

Carsten Felgentreff (University of Osnabrück)

Making Sense of Climate Change: Interpretation of Ecological Disadvantages and Rural Hardship on the Fijian Island of Kabara

Michael Goldsmith (University of Waikato)

Tuvalu's Trajectory as a Climate Change Test Case: Historical Accidents and Geo-Political Intentions

Rebecca Hofmann (RCC/Climates of Migration)

The Diverse Challenges of Climate Change: Determinants, Agents and Alternatives in Chuuk, FSM

16:00–17:00 **Final Discussion**

Chairs Rebecca Hofmann & Uwe Lübken (RCC/Climates of Migration)

19:00 **Conference Dinner**

Venue Rachel Carson Center, Leopoldstr. 11a, 80802 Munich

Transport By subway (U-Bahn):

- **U3/U6**, disembark at Giselastraße and follow signs to the exit Georgenstraße. On exiting the subway station, you will be on Leopoldstraße. The RCC is located just a few meters away.

By bus: Line 54 or 154

- **Bus 54**, get off at Giselastraße. You will now be next to Leopoldstraße. Facing Leopoldstraße, turn left and follow the street approximately 250 meters to number 11a.
- **Bus 154**, get off at Georgenstraße. You will now be facing number 11a.



Registration This conference is free and open to the public; however registration is required. Please send an e-mail to events@carsoncenter.lmu.de to sign up.



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