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"Can Climate Influence Cultural Development? A View through Time"

Haberle, Simon G., and Alex Chepstow Lusty

Haberle, Simon G., and Alex Chepstow Lusty. "Can Climate Influence Cultural Development? A View through Time." *Environment and History* 6, no. 3 (Aug., 2000): 349–369. doi:10.3197/096734000129342334 . Despite the devastating impact that flooding, drought and fire associated with the 1982/3 and 1997/8 El Nino events had on both the natural environment and human society, there is little information on the persistence or impact similar events may have had in the 'deeper' past. Palaeoecologists can offer insight into the nature of environmental change over a range of spatiotemporal scales, utilising high-resolution techniques that can broaden the interpretation of issues that are specifically relevant to historians, geographers and anthropologists. In some cases there appears to be a correspondence between major climatic events and a change in cultural development that leads us to ask the question, 'How significant has climate change been in the development of human society?' We discuss the role of environmental history in studies of cultural change, and critically assess four case studies where climate may have had a significant impact on the development of human society: human evolution in Africa, development of agriculture in New Guinea, urban collapse in Central and South America, and Pacific island occupation. All rights reserved. © 2000 The White Horse Press

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