

Archaeology Seminar Series 2020

Does climate change really cause collapse? Insights into the Indus Civilisation from the 'Land, Water and Settlement' and 'TwoRains' projects

Cameron Petrie
University of Cambridge

JULY
23



Rainfall systems are complex and variable, yet they are of fundamental importance for understanding the past and planning for the future due to their potential for direct impact on food security and hence the sustainability of human settlement in particular areas. Given that human populations can

adapt their behaviour to a wide range of climatic and

environmental conditions, it is essential that we understand the degree to which human choices in the past were resilient and sustainable in the face of variable weather conditions and abrupt events of climate change. Using the case study of South Asia's Indus Civilisation, this presentation will consider modern weather systems, palaeoclimate proxy data, floodplain hydrology, ancient settlement distribution, bioarchaeological evidence and the dynamics of production and distribution of craft products to explore the complexities of human and environment relationships before, during and after the 4.2 ka BP climate event. The Indus was unique amongst early civilisations in that it developed across a range of distinctive environmental and ecological zones, where the distribution of westerly winter rains overlapped with the rains of the Indian Summer Monsoon. The Indus Civilisation thus provides an ideal case for exploring how societies can respond to complex rain systems that are innately variable and witness abrupt change. This paper presents the results of the collaborative *Land, Water and Settlement* and *TwoRains* projects, which have been exploring the dynamics of human-environment interaction in northwest India.

SPEAKER BIO

Dr Cameron Petrie conducts research on the archaeology of India, Pakistan and Iran. He has been with the Department of Archaeology in Cambridge since 2005, when he became the Research Councils UK Fellow in South Asian and Iranian Archaeology, and was appointed as a lecturer in 2010, senior lecturer in 2014 and reader in 2016. Prior to coming to Cambridge, he was the Katherine and Leonard Woolley Junior Research Fellow at Somerville College Oxford (2003-2006), and was appointed to that position after finishing his PhD at the University of Sydney (1998-2002).

TIME

Zoom Webinar, **Thursday 8:30pm**,
Australian Eastern Standard Time,
Melbourne, Australia (Meeting
registration in advance required)

CONTACT NAME

Phillip Edwards
p.edwards@latrobe.edu.au
