

The Dantean Middle East: Syria, the Hijaz, and Natural Extreme Events as Indicators for Rapid Climate Change - Reconstruction, Impact, and Coping Strategies (1250-1382)

Initiative: Freigeist-Fellowships

Bewilligung: 11.12.2017

Laufzeit: 2 Jahre

The project on "The Dantean Middle East" aims to provide the first comprehensive reconstruction of the extreme meteorological events and ensuing natural disasters and social crises in Syria and the Hijaz between 1250 and 1382 CE. In addition, the project will examine the impact of these events on Mamluk society and how contemporaries coped with these problems and sought to prevent them. The project focuses on a number of largely unknown, primarily historiographical Arabic manuscripts from libraries throughout Europe and the Near East, combining extracts from these manuscripts with previous research and other published primary sources. The data which can be extracted from these various sources will be compiled into climate indices on precipitation and temperature and indices of social extreme events like dearth, famine, and epidemics, as is planned for the other subprojects of the DANTEAN ANOMALY junior research group. This first in-depth climate historical reconstruction for the Mamluk Middle East will allow for comparative analysis of the conclusions reached by the Freigeist Fellow for three European regions. Furthermore, it will open a global perspective by providing an initial answer to the question of whether the Dantean Anomaly (1309-1321) was indeed a hemispherical phenomenon, which would mean that coping strategies and their cultural prerequisites can be compared beyond the Latin-Christian frame of late medieval Europe. Finally, the project facilitates cooperation with climatologists interested in reconstructions of climatic conditions in the Middle East in historical time, as climate proxies based on scientific data are extremely limited for these regions.

Projektbeteiligte

Dr. Martin Bauch

Leibniz-Institut für Geschichte und
Kultur des östlichen Europa (GWZO) e.V.
Abteilung Mensch und Umwelt
Forschungsgruppe "Dantean Anomaly"
Leipzig