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## Natural Hazards: from Plinius' time to the Anthropocene

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Plinius (23-79 AD) is known worldwide as the author of the encyclopedic *Naturalis Historia*. He died in Stabiae while trying to rescue his family from the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, one of the deadliest volcanic eruptions in European history that also destroyed the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii. At that time, natural hazards were mostly seen as “acts of God(s)”. Instead, in today’s Anthropocene, extreme events coexist with two dichotomic (and rather simplistic) views: “disasters are natural” vs. “humans are to blame since they live in risky areas”. In this lecture, I present scientific and societal challenges associated with the increasing impact (from Plinius’ time to the Anthropocene) of humans on the spatial and temporal distribution of natural hazards. I also problematize and challenge myths, preconceptions and conventional wisdoms related with uncertainty, behavioral heuristics, expert vs. local knowledge, social power and inequalities. To this end, I review recent studies in various socioeconomic contexts, and across multiple hazards, with a focus on five events that have significantly influenced my research work: the 1963 Vajont Dam landslide, the 2004 flooding in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, the 2009 L’Aquila earthquake, the water crisis (Day Zero) during the 2015-2017 drought in Cape Town and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.