

New age researchers highlight how man is changing the world

February 2 2011



Angkor Tom in Cambodia provides a striking metaphor for the Anthropocene.
Credit: University of Leicester

Human influence on the landscape, global warming, sea level rise, ocean acidification and biodiversity are highlighted in a new set of studies led by University of Leicester researchers.

How this influence will be reflected in the distinctive geological record forms the basis of the studies published in *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A*.

Jan Zalasiewicz and Mark Williams from the University of Leicester Department of Geology led the production of the studies into the Anthropocene – a new geological epoch distinguished by the change that man has wrought upon the earth.

Dr Zalasiewicz said: "At the beginning of this millennium, the Nobel Prize winning chemist Paul Crutzen suggested that we are now living in a new geological interval of time that is dominated by human activities. He termed this the Anthropocene. Since then, the Anthropocene has increasingly been used both by scientists and by the public as in indication of the scale of human change to planet Earth.

"Our new studies published in *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A* feature nearly 70 scientists – including Paul Crutzen himself, Sir Crispin Tickell, Professor Will Steffen and many others.



This image shows the Shanghai skyline. Credit: University of Leicester

"The results give us a much clearer picture of the way in which we are changing the world – and of how long these changes might last."

The authors contend that recent human activity, including stunning population growth, sprawling megacities and increased use of fossil fuels, have changed the planet to such an extent that we are entering what they call the Anthropocene (New Man) Epoch.

They add: "The Anthropocene represents a new phase in the history of both humankind and of the Earth, when natural forces and human forces became intertwined, so that the fate of one determines the fate of the other. Geologically, this is a remarkable episode in the history of this planet."

Provided by University of Leicester

Citation: New age researchers highlight how man is changing the world (2011, February 2) retrieved 13 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-02-age-highlight-world.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--