

Preface

“9th EGU Plinius Conference on Mediterranean Storms (2007)”

The 9th EGU Plinius Conference on Mediterranean Storms (Plinius-9 Conference, hereafter) was held on 10–13 September 2007 at the International Congress Centre *Villa Monastero* in Varenna, Italy (see <http://meetings.copernicus.org/plinius9>). While one of us (A. Mugnai) had been appointed by the Plinius Steering Committee as the Plinius-9 Programme Committee Chair, all of us shared the honor and responsibility of organizing the Conference and delineating the general structure of the scientific program.

The Conference was the ninth in a series of forums that was established in 1999 within the framework of the activities of the European Geophysical Society (EGS) Interdisciplinary Working Group on Natural Hazards (IWG-NH). The original objective of the Plinius Conference was to provide an international forum for in-depth, multidisciplinary discussions concerning the scientific aspects of natural hazards associated with severe storms in the Mediterranean basin. It was a welcome and timely idea, confirmed by the fact that over the years the annual meetings of the Plinius Conference have provided a vital contribution to the improvement of our understanding of extreme precipitation events over the Mediterranean basin, including the posterior hazards of floods, landslides, heavy coastal waves, and human tragedies. Incidentally, it should be noted that since 2002, the Plinius Conference has been organized under the auspices of the Natural Hazards Division of the European Geosciences Union (EGU), which was founded as the result of a merger of the EGS and the European Union of Geosciences (EUG).

As the first step, we decided that the 2007 Plinius Conference would be held at the International Congress Centre *Villa Monastero* in Varenna, Italy. This choice stemmed from the fact that the Varenna Congress Centre, which is hosted in a magnificent ancient monastery and patrician abode on Lake Como, has gained an international reputation in recent decades as an ideal venue and environment for organizing international cultural and scientific meetings and conferences. In addition, we had a special motivation for holding the Conference in the Lake Como area – namely, the famous roman writer, scientist and naturalist *Gaius Plinius Secundus*, better known as *Plinius Maior* (Pliny the Elder), to whom the Con-

ference is dedicated, was born in the largest city of this area (Como), after which the roman *Larius lacus* takes its modern name.

Then, based on our continuous participation and involvement in all previous annual meetings, as well as on inputs from a number of colleagues who had been active in organizing previous Plinius Conferences, we decided to pursue an interdisciplinary forum for discussion of the state of knowledge and advances in research and applications related to hazardous Mediterranean storms. Accordingly, we organized the Plinius-9 Conference around a diverse set of topics addressing: (a) the nature and physical processes of extreme precipitation events; (b) the expected changes of these storms in relationship to predicted climate changes; (c) the various advanced techniques being used to observe, monitor, and forecast these storms; (d) the relationships of these storms to coupled surface processes, with particular emphasis on damaging floods, landslides, and heavy coastal waves; and (e) the implications of these destructive storms vis-à-vis socio-economic factors. We also invited 25 colleagues who are internationally recognized experts in these fields, and who had provided lasting contributions to the scientific organization of previous Plinius Conferences, to become members of the Scientific Committee and to help convene and organize the various (14) Conference sessions. Finally, we invited 9 colleagues who are international authorities in their fields, to give key-note addresses.

We were delighted that the Plinius-9 Conference was very successful, evidenced by the large number of abstracts that were submitted (170) and by a conspicuous attendance of 137 scientists from a number of European countries, as well as from the Middle East, the United States, and Australia.

This special issue of ADGEO contains 18 papers that are based on oral/poster presentations at the Plinius-9 Conference – including the two presentations for which T. Hashino and X. Yan received the *Med-Storm Prize for Young Researchers*. Noteworthy, 17 additional papers are published in a special issue of NHESS dedicated to the same Conference (see http://www.nat-hazards-earth-syst-sci.net/special_issue81.html).

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Special Volume Editors

