

Editorial

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Published online: 23 December 2011

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In our third issue of 2011, water history in its broad sense is presented, with articles discussing Finland, the USA, China, and Argentina. In her article, Korjonen-Kuusipuro focuses on the Vuoksi River in Finland. This 150-km long river saw industry starting along its riverbanks in the late nineteenth century. In the early twentieth century, five hydropower plants were built. After the 1939 war between Finland and the Soviet Union, the Vuoksi became a transboundary river. The author shows how water became a critical element in the peacemaking process between Finland and the Soviet Union. In the second article, MacKinnon discusses water management in Wyoming between 1900 and 1925. The article presents the case of Wyoming water administrators and water users together moving away from centralized management to management with strong attributes of common property management. The author explains this change as a response to the physical and economic environment. Abudu, Cevik, Bawazir, King, and Chunliang discuss the ancient karez (qanat) systems in the Turpan region of China in the third article. Based on an overview including cultural importance, socio-economic impacts, environmental interactions, and agriculture; the article shows in what ways the karez systems are potential water suppliers for irrigation and domestic uses. However, karez systems are under pressure, through groundwater withdrawals with modern pumps. In the fourth article, Forget and Bravard present the Paranà river. 60 maps from the fifteenth to the twentieth century are studied, allowing a history of the river dynamics, with its changing sandbanks, islands and shapes. Tracing the history of the river through its maps, the article shows how these different cartographies together improve our understanding how the current Paranà river is the result of a long history of human–environmental interaction.

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