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Maurits Ertsen

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In this second issue of 2012, we offer four articles that show the geographic breadth and methodological diversity in the field of water history. In the first, Anna Bohman discusses the politics of urban water management in Accra, Ghana. Since the 1990s, the commercialization of water services in low income countries has received much scholarly attention. However, little of this literature has approached this trend from a longer time perspective. Bohman historicizes contemporary policy debates on urban water supply and sanitation provision by analyzing how British colonial policies and Ghana's post-colonial governments set the stage for today's water problems. Her analysis emphasizes the continuity between past and contemporary debates. She suggests that the colonial legacy continues to normalise inequality in access to water.

The second contribution, by Tony Wilkinson and colleagues, takes us to Iran. Based on a workshop from the Durham University Centre for Iranian Cultural Studies, the article focuses on the major research questions surrounding the future study of the archaeology of Iran's ancient water systems. The authors present small-scale prehistoric systems as examples of 'human niche construction'. By the first millennium BCE, a considerable increase of major water systems appeared, with the evidence suggesting that imperial authorities constructed these systems. Also, the authors argue that qantas may have multiple centres of origin, with one primary centre located in a broad zone of south-east Iran, Pakistan, and south-east Arabia.

In our third article Akiko Sakai and colleagues compare historical records, proxy data such as ice cores, tree rings, and lake sediments, and meteorological data to reconstruct the droughts and floods of the China's Hei river basin. Using discharge calculation methods and hydrological modelling, they find that the glacier extent reached a maximum between 1520 and 1690 CE. Several historical drought events occurred during periods of reduced calculated discharge, while flood events tended to coincide with increased discharges. At least two drought events appear to be anthropogenic.

The final article by Eva Panagiotakopulu and Paul Buckland explores the settling of south-west Greenland at the end of the tenth century. Archaeological evidence from

M. Ertsen (✉)
Delft University of Technology, Delft, GA 2600, The Netherlands
e-mail: m.w.ertsen@tudelft.nl

settlement sites shows agricultural innovation in the use of irrigation as well as manuring of hayfields. The authors situate these irrigated fields in their Icelandic and North European context. They argue that these techniques began in 1126, with the arrival of the first resident bishop from Scandinavia. The need for fodder for the bishop's cattle drove these changes in land use.

It is clear that these four papers offer a diversity indicating the richness of our field. What is also clear is that this issue shows that cross-disciplinary collaboration, including integration of scientific, archaeological and historical data is a fruitful approach to study water history.