Editorial 8.1

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In this first issue of 2016, four papers show the eagerness of humans to control and shape water resources and the spatial and temporal consequences this can lead to. In the first paper H. C. Ross and S.E. Wolfe use terror management theory (TMT) to analyze the decision to build the Hoover Dam, the iconic “dam of dams”. While the motivations to construct outstanding, but unsustainable water infrastructure projects is a common theme in water history, examining the influence of *mortality salience*—reminders of our vulnerability and inescapable mortality—is not. In addition to furthering our understanding of the dam’s history, Ross and Wolfe raise new questions about the construction of water projects, such as whether and how existential concerns (unconsciously) motivated individuals to construct such projects. In the second paper, Vincent Lagendijk takes us to the “river of rivers” in terms of transboundary studies—the Rhine—to explore the pivotal position of the river in the development of a European electricity system. The paper shows that the Rhine was both an important transportation corridor and the backbone of electricity supply systems in the twentieth century. Lagendijk shows how the river’s uses were linked with electricity generation both below and beyond the nation-state level. The issue’s final two papers, Delphine Driaux’s on water supply in ancient Egyptian settlements and Dietmar Roth and colleagues’ work on Vélez Blanco, East Andalusia, were presented at a workshop organized in February 2014 by the Cluster of Excellence Topoi of the Freie Universität Berlin, Germany, and will be introduced in more detail in a separate editorial (on page ##). Like the first two papers, these papers also demonstrate the wide spatial, temporal, and cultural range of human relationship to water systems.

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