Water Hist (2017) 9:107–108
DOI 10.1007/s12685-017-0201-6

Editorial Issue 2, 2017

Maurits W. Ertsen[1] · Ellen Arnold[2]

Published online: 1 June 2017

This second issue of Water History in 2017 again displays the diversity and richness of the water-historical field. The first paper by Adriaan de Kraker discusses water in its frozen form, ice, especially how ice on Dutch and Belgian rivers and canals during the Little Ice Age affected shipping activities. The paper shows how such extreme circumstances during the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries have been dealt with in a comparative perspective for Flanders, Holland and Emden (Germany). The Dutch water boards discussed by Erik Mostert in the second paper had much less to do with ice, but plenty of issues remained after 1953. In this period the number of water boards was reduced from 2670 to 24, new tasks were allocated to them, and representation changed significantly. In a way, these changes also meant that water boards have successfully resisted proposals to abolish them as well.

In his discussion on water in the ancient Decapolis city of Gadara, Patrick Keilholz takes us to a semi-arid climate zone in the Near East. Initially cisterns collected rainwater. Later, the increased water demand was met through a 30-km-long aqueduct. In the Roman period, a new aqueduct of 153 km was built. After severe earthquake-caused damage of these structures in the eighth century, cisterns once again became important. In our fourth paper we jump in space and time to the city of La Paz, Mexico, after 1960. Melisa Haeffner offers a hydrosocial analysis highlighting historical, biophysical, economic, and cultural relations embedded in the city's water infrastructure. This complex narrative challenges the traditional ideas of urban and rural water users being separate.

Johann Tempelhoff focuses on the South African Water Act of 1956 in relation to Apartheid policies. In 1956, South African water policy shifted from irrigation infrastructure and bulk water governance responsibilities to more comprehensive water infrastructure for industrial development and the rapidly growing urban areas. At the same time, the Water Act had to deal with the new policy of separate development (Apartheid). In the

✉ Maurits W. Ertsen
M.W.Ertsen@tudelft.nl

[1] Delft University of Technology, Delft, The Netherlands

[2] Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, USA

final paper, Pablo Arístide explores the complex history of water management, land use and bio-geophysical conditions in the Figueroa Irrigation System in Argentina. Combining oral history and archival study, the paper shows how past events continue to influence river dynamics and resource management of local peasants today. Understanding such longer-term social-ecological changes is key to thinking about possible future trajectories.

This issue moves the reader from the Netherlands to the Near East, from South Africa to South America, across thousands of years, through six fascinating water histories.