

## Editorial issue 4, 2017

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One of the most delightful aspects of working with this journal is that we get to see the remarkable variety of water issues that concern historians, archaeologists, scientists, activists, and citizens around the world. Perhaps there is no more universally experienced concern than access to and control of water; except, perhaps, for the question raised in our first article of the issue: “Where’s the loo?” A. Kate Trusler’s article publishes the results of several seasons of field work at the site of ancient Pompeii. Pompeii has long been a laboratory for efforts to learn more about Roman domesticity. Mapping the locations of downpipes and latrines to spatially model the distribution and location of residential toilets, Trusler’s article offers important conclusions that add greatly to our understanding of the use and function of Roman domestic spaces.

This issue highlights articles that address the relationship between cities and water. Our authors examine the water infrastructure of Pompeii, Athens, Kolkata, Bengaluru, and Beijing. Spanning the globe, the essays highlight how local politics, power, and economies shaped domestic access to water and water infrastructure, and how the role of the state mattered in that relationship. Users of water are often highlighted less in water history than the larger, more powerful actors who shape water’s supply. These articles, all case studies of single cities, suggest the relevance of focused attention on the users and consumers of urban water supplies as well as on the institutions and arrangements that procure and maintain them.

In this issue we are presenting results of a study of the history of water in Athens over the longue duree. In a two part study, M. Christaki, G. Stournaras, P. T. Nastos, and N. Mamassis assess the history of the water supply of their city. The first article covers a surprisingly long span of time—from the founding of the city through the nineteenth

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century. The long time frame allows the authors to highlight some of the elements of continuity, including the story of conquest and imperial occupation; Romans, Florentines and Ottomans all occupied Athens, often for centuries. The second of the paired articles, in contrast, covers only a century. The focus of Christaki et al. in this piece shifts to the rapid pace of development following Greek liberation in 1834. The city, which they argue had been relatively dormant, experienced remarkably quick growth, which led to an intensification of water supply infrastructure. The subsequent development of dams, reservoirs, and aqueducts marked a period of development that transformed the hydraulic and urban landscapes.

We then highlight two essays on urban water supply in India. Luke Juran and Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt focus on middle-class water consumers from 1960 to the present. Using practice theory, they argue that the urban middle class perceptions and use of water have dramatically changed over the course of 50 years. Strikingly, households have shifted to private water suppliers and drew on multiple sources rather than a single public sources. They argue that this is connected to changing attempts to demonstrate access to capital and to “reinforce middle class status, both outwardly and inwardly.” In their article on Bengaluru, Hitat Unnikrishnan, Sen Sreerupa, and Harding Nagendra focus on a different aspect of changing urban waterscapes. They examine the declining use of traditional, resilient, and heterogeneous urban water sources (lakes, ponds, and stepwells). The move away from these traditional modes, they argue, has created urban waterscapes in the city that leave users more vulnerable, particularly those communities that are alienated from some of the security discussed by Juran and Lahore-Dutt.

Finally, we turn to Beijing, where Lei Zhang also sees urban economic development and socio-economic marginalization at play in the history of Beijing’s two discrete water systems. She argues that political strategies of social segregation combined with the city’s natural hydrology to maintain a dichotomous water system. Domestic access to water was determined by both location and socio-natural “arrangements,” as those in the Inner city enjoyed access to a state-run system while those in the Outer City had to deal with private carriers. This article is a reminder of the many forces shaping people’s daily access to water. In all, these articles work together to emphasize the breadth of water history and the degree to which state decisions, social arrangements, and natural conditions intersect in shaping the daily experience of urban residents.