Editors' introduction

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In this issue of *Water History*, we are delighted to present you with four articles that push us to pay attention to administration, economics, the ways modern scientific methods can work magic for researchers, and the mythologies we build around technological stories. These essays highlight the range of actors that are part of the story of water research—from the oft-studied engineers, water managers, and state powers to rose-sellers, Romantic authors, and tour guides. Weaving through the essays is a conversation about not only how past people managed water and water power, but also how they organized themselves to understand, interrogate, and mythologize such actions.

The first essay is Andrew McTominey's "Water and the modern engineered city: the Association of Water Engineers in a British and transnational context, 1896–1914." This article explores the development of a professional organization for water engineers, detailing their start-up pains, their ambitions, and the interpersonal and international relationships forged on behalf of and because of the society. McTominey recounts a process that will remind many of the successes and difficulties of contemporary academic associations, replete with tricky annual meetings, local field trips, international squabbles and cooperations, and competitive organizations. Ultimately, McTominey reminds us that such organizations, though they might wield power and shape practice, were not monolithic entities, but precarious groups of individual practitioners hoping to advance their scientific fields.

The second essay turns to the fruits of the continued development of scientific processes and collaboration, when Rowin J. Van Lanen and Menne C. Kosian showcase "What wetlands can teach us: reconstructing historical water-management systems and their present-day importance through GIScience." Renewed scientific awareness of the ecological value of wetlands and the latest GIS modeling combine with traditional heritage work to reveal centuries of transformations and management of Dutch wetlands. They present the method of Historical Geographical Information System (HGIS), and argue that it is a valuable tool for understanding past wetlands and potentially shaping modern policy.

The third essay, "Waterpower romance: the cultural myth of dying watermills in German hydro-narratives around 1900," is by Agnes Limmer and Christian Zumbärgel. They argue that modern mythmaking has shaped a false understanding of the history of the transition between water regimes at the turn of the last century. They question the understanding of watermills ca. 1900 being "old" or "outmoded" and offer up instead an interpretation of the

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mills as active and important competitors to the new-fangled hydropower schemes. At the same time, they work to de-romanticize the post-industrial image of the water wheel.

What is more romantic than water wheels? Roses. And they are the subject of our final essay, by Patricio Mena-Vásquez. “Roses: the latest chapter in the conflicted history of controlling irrigation water in the Ecuadorian Andes” takes as its subject a relative newcomer to the list of water users in the Andes, exploring how a water-intensive, cash crop became a fixture of the Ecuadorian highlands. Mena-Vásquez argues that the relatively new rose plantations rose to prominence in part because of the colonial networks and power structures put in place over water resources. This story is one of demand, wealth, privatization, and the long-lasting reach of colonial power. The essay also explores the tense relationship between cash crops and food security, and the ways in which local actors have stepped into the rose business, complicating discussions of “food vs. flowers.”

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