



Editorial

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This issue of *Water History* features articles that highlight the range and dynamism of current scholarship in the field. The authors present case studies of places, processes, and sources that work on multiple scales and engage different ways that people have interacted with water resources.

This volume is bookended by two articles in our “Medieval Waters,” collection. In “From bank to bank, as much as the tide and the sea’s waves cover,” Josu Narbarte looks at several centuries of practices and policies built up around salmon fishing. His deep engagement with archival materials reveals that salmon weirs, “acting as nodes of persistent conflicts inside the landscape,” became material points for the playing out of social and political concerns. Peter Brown turns to medieval Basra, reconstructing the ways that the early Islamic community met water needs and developed infrastructure. “Supplying a medieval metropolis: water management and agriculture in the hinterland of early Islamic Basra” blends historical, topographical, and cartographical materials to reconstruct a complex hydrological landscape.

A similar blend of materials is expertly drawn together in “Hydrological maps as a tool for the exploration of historical water systems at Badami, Karnataka, India.” The authors, Kuili Suganya, Mythrayi Harshavardhan and M. B. Rajani, demonstrate how a combination of remote sensing technology, historical maps, and field research can help build more nuanced understandings of historical water systems. They model how using new mapping technologies can transform unremarkable landscape features into key pieces of evidence in reconstructing the complex ways people shape and create hydrological landscapes.

Christopher Schulz and William Adams shift the focus to the politics and practices of a single moment in international water history. With “Addressing conflict over dams: the inception and establishment of the World Commission on Dams,” they look in detail at the

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processes and actors that made up the Commission, using oral histories to underscore the ways in which transnational groups are still composed of individual people and are worked out via interpersonal communication. By walking us through the processes of forming and running the World Commission, the article reveals the ways in which this commission helped re-frame international cooperation and provide a political model for inclusion of a wider range of actors and stakeholders.

Finally, Robert Nemes' and Melanie Salvisberg's articles both focus on issues of river regulation, modernization, and hydropower at the local level in Europe. In "River regulation, infrastructure, and small-town modernity on the Hungarian Danube, 1870–1945," Nemes demonstrates that the history of small, "unexceptional" places deserves space in our stories of water's past. He draws on a wide range of local history materials to show how changes to river infrastructure shaped new opportunities for the town, but finds those benefits were unevenly distributed. Salvisberg's essay, "Taming the torrent: changes in flood protection at the Gürbe River (Switzerland) from the nineteenth century until today," embraces a smaller river. She tackles the history of attempts to regulate the Gürbe as part of flood control programs. Here, too, local conflicts, disagreements, and unequal benefit from flood control led to a complicated and dynamic history.

Taken together, these pieces remind us of the importance of looking to smaller scales when doing river history. The smaller tributaries of larger rivers, smaller towns dwarfed by larger urban actors, individual fishing communities, and even the personalities of people involved in larger policy development all shape water histories.

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