Water, Life and Civilisation

Climate, Environment and Society in the Jordan Valley

*Water, Life and Civilisation* provides a unique interdisciplinary study of the relationships between climate, hydrology and human society from 20,000 years ago to 100 years into the future. At the heart of the book is a series of case studies that integrate climate and hydrological modelling with palaeoenvironmental and archaeological evidence to generate new insights into the Neolithic, Bronze Age and Classical periods in the Jordan Valley. The volume not only develops our understanding of this most critical region, but provides a new approach and new methods that can be utilised for exploring the relationships between climate, hydrology and human society in arid and semi-arid regions throughout the world.

This volume describes how state-of-the-art models can simulate the past, present and future climates of the Near East, reviews and provides new evidence for environmental change from geological deposits, builds hydrological models for the River Jordan and associated wadis and explains how present-day urban and rural communities manage their water supply. It demonstrates how the theories and methods of meteorology, hydrology, geology, human geography and archaeology can be integrated to generate new insights into not only the past, from the hunter-gatherers of the Pleistocene to classical civilisation, but also the present and future. As such, it is an invaluable reference for researchers and advanced students concerned with the impacts of climate change and hydrology on human society, especially in the Near East.

*Steven Mithen* is Professor of Early Prehistory and Pro-Vice Chancellor for International and External Engagement at the University of Reading. Having originally studied at the Slade School for Fine Art, he has a BA degree in Archaeology (Sheffield University), an MSc in Biological Computation (York University) and a PhD in Archaeology (Cambridge University). He was appointed a lecturer at the University of Reading in 1992, where he has since served as Head of the School of Human and Environmental Sciences (2003–2008) and Dean of the Faculty of Science (2008–2010) prior to his present appointment as a Pro-Vice Chancellor. He directs archaeological fieldwork projects in western Scotland, where he is attempting to reconstruct Mesolithic settlement patterns, and in southern Jordan where he is excavating the early Neolithic village of WF16 in Wadi Faynan. In addition to such archaeological research, he has sought to develop interdisciplinary approaches to the past by integrating archaeology with theories and methods from the environmental and cognitive sciences. He is the author of several books including *The Prehistory of the Mind* (1996), *After the Ice* (2003), *The Singing Neanderthals* (2005) and *To the Islands* (2010), and editor of *The Early Prehistory of Wadi Faynan* (2007, with Bill Finlayson) and *Hunter-Gatherer Landscape Archaeology* (2000). Steven Mithen was elected as a Fellow of the British Academy in 2003.

*Emily Black* is a senior research fellow at the University of Reading. After completing a BA in Natural Sciences at the University of Cambridge and a DPhil in Andean tectonics at the University of Oxford, in 2000 she was appointed a post-doctoral research fellow at the Climate Division of the National Centre for Atmospheric Science. In 2005, she took up the post of project manager of the Water, Life and Civilisation project. She has published widely in the scientific literature on a variety of topics, including Middle East climate change, African rainfall variability and seasonal forecasting.
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Water, Life and Civilisation

Climate, Environment and Society in the Jordan Valley

Edited by Steven Mithen and Emily Black

University of Reading
This volume is dedicated to Professor Bruce Sellwood (1947–2007).

Bruce was a pioneer of integrating palaeoclimatic modelling and geological research. He was an inspirational figure within the Water, Life and Civilisation Project and has been sorely missed by his colleagues for both his academic contributions and bonhomie.

Bruce Sellwood recording a section of the Lisan Marl for the Water, Life and Civilisation project, 2006.
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Contributors

Ambroise Baker
Long-Term Ecology Laboratory,
School of Geography and the Environment,
University of Oxford,
Oxford, OX1 3QY, UK

Emily Black
Department of Meteorology,
University of Reading,
Earley Gate, PO Box 243,
Reading, RG6 6BB, UK

Stuart Black
Department of Archaeology,
School of Human and Environmental Sciences,
University of Reading,
Whiteknights, PO Box 227,
Reading, RG6 6AB, UK

Andrew V. Bradley
Department of Geography,
University of Leicester,
University Road,
Leicester, LE1 7RH, UK

David Brayshaw
Department of Meteorology,
University of Reading,
Earley Gate, PO Box 243,
Reading, RG6 6BB, UK

Dan Butterfield
Water Resource Associates,
PO Box 838, Wallingford OX10 9XA, UK

Gemma Carr
Centre for Water Resource Systems,
Vienna University of Technology,
Karlsplatz 13/222, A-1040 Vienna,
Austria

Khadija Darmame
The French Institute of the Near East,
BP 830413,
Amman, 11183,
Jordan

Mohammed El Bastawesy
National Authority for Remote Sensing and Space Sciences,
Cairo, Egypt

Sarah Elliott
School of Human and Environmental Sciences,
University of Reading,
Whiteknights, PO Box 227,
Reading, RG6 6AB, UK

Bill Finlayson
Council for British Research in the Levant (CBRL),
10 Carlton House Terrace,
London,
SW1Y 5AH, UK

Richard Fitton
Talisman Energy Inc.,
Suite 3400, 888 – 3rd St Southwest,
Calgary,
Alberta, Canada

Nicola Flynn
School of Human and Environmental Sciences,
University of Reading,
Whiteknights, PO Box 227,
Reading, RG6 6AB, UK

Rebecca Foote
C/o School of Human and Environmental Sciences,
The University of Reading,
Whiteknights, PO Box 227,
Reading, RG6 6AB, UK
LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Rachel Goodship
School of Human and Environmental Sciences,
The University of Reading,
Whiteknights, PO Box 227,
Reading, RG6 6AB, UK

Joshua Guest
School of Human and Environmental Sciences,
The University of Reading,
Whiteknights, PO Box 227,
Reading, RG6 6AB, UK

Paul Holmes
School of Human and Environmental Sciences,
The University of Reading,
Whiteknights, PO Box 227,
Reading, RG6 6AB, UK

Brian Hoskins
Department of Meteorology,
University of Reading,
Earley Gate, PO Box 243,
Reading, RG6 6BB, UK

Robyn Inglis
Department of Archaeology,
University of Cambridge,
Downing Street,
Cambridge, CB2 3DZ, UK

Khalil Jamjoum
National Centre for Agricultural Research and Extension,
PO Box 639,
Ba’qa’a 19381, Jordan

Emma Jenkins
School of Applied Sciences,
Bournemouth University,
Christchurch House,
Talbot Campus, Poole,
Dorset, BH12 5BB, UK

Jaimie L. Lovell
Council for British Research in the Levant (CBRL),
10 Carlton House Terrace,
London, SW1Y 5AH, UK

Ron Manley
Water Resource Associates Limited,
PO Box 838,
Wallingford, OX10 9XA, UK

Steven Mithen
University of Reading,
Whiteknights, PO Box 227,
Reading, RG6 6AB UK

Gundula Müldner
School of Human and Environmental Sciences,
The University of Reading,
Whiteknights, PO Box 227,
Reading, RG6 6AB, UK

Stephen Nortcliff
School of Human and Environmental Sciences,
The University of Reading,
Whiteknights, PO Box 227,
Reading, RG6 6DW, UK

Sameeh Al Nuimat
Permaculture Project,
CARE International – Jordan,
PO Box 950793 – Amman 11195,
Jordan

John Peter Oleson
Department of Greek and Roman Studies,
Box 3045, University of Victoria,
Victoria BC, V8W 2P3, Canada

David Plinston
Water Resource Associates,
PO Box 838,
Wallingford, OX10 9XA, UK

Robert B. Potter
School of Human and Environmental Sciences,
The University of Reading,
Whiteknights, PO Box 227,
Reading, RG6 6AB, UK

Claire Rambeau
c/o School of Human and Environmental Sciences,
The University of Reading,
Whiteknights, PO Box 227,
Reading, RG6 6AB, UK

Stuart Robinson
Department of Earth Sciences,
University College London,
Gower Street,
London, WC1E 6BT, UK
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michela Sandias</td>
<td>School of Human and Environmental Sciences, The University of Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce Sellwood</td>
<td>School of Human and Environmental Sciences, The University of Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia Slingo</td>
<td>Department of Meteorology, University of Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam Smith</td>
<td>Department of Anthropology and Geography, Oxford Brookes University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen R. Stokes</td>
<td>Department of Archaeology, University of York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul J. Valdes</td>
<td>School of Geographical Sciences, University of Bristol, University Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Wade</td>
<td>School of Human and Environmental Sciences, The University of Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Whitehead</td>
<td>School of Human and Environmental Sciences, The University of Reading</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

The authors and editors are grateful to the Leverhulme Trust for generously funding the Water, Life and Civilisation (WLC) project (Grant no. F/00239/R), and thus enabling them to carry out the research described in this volume.

The majority of this research has been undertaken in Jordan and we are immensely grateful to the following for their support: Princess Sumaya bint Hassan, patron of the archaeological field work in Wadi Faynan undertaken by the Council for British Research in the Levant (CBRL) and its collaborators; Dr Abed al-Nabi Fardour (Director of National Centre for Agricultural Research and Technology Transfer, NCARTT), Khalil Jamjoum (NCARTT) and Sameeh Nuimat (Ministry of Agriculture), with regard to Chapters 12, 21, 22 and 24); Dr Fawwaz al-Khraysheh (Director General of the Department of Antiquities) for permission to undertake fieldwork in Wadi Faynan and at Jawa; Nasr Khasawneh and Mohammed al Zahrani, who were the Department of Antiquities Representatives for fieldwork in Jawa and Wadi Faynan, respectively; Professor Dawud Al-Eisawi of the University of Jordan, for its ongoing collaboration regarding pollen analyses of the Dead Sea peaty deposits (sampled during the WLC project and still being analysed), and Sagida Abu-Seir (University of Jordan) for sample preparation and identification of the pollen species; Dr Mohammed Najjar (Council for British Research in the Levant) for advice and information regarding Chapters 12 and 13). Professor Zaid al-Sa’ad, Professor M. El-Najjar and Dr A. Al-Shorman (Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of Yarmouk University Jordan), with regard to Chapter 20; and Dr L. Khalil (Department of Archaeology of the University of Jordan), for permission to sample skeletal remains for Chapter 20. With regard to the research concerning water issues in Jordan and especially with regard to present-day Amman (Chapters 24–28), we are grateful to: Professor Nasim Barham (University of Jordan); Dr Philipp Magiera (Team Leader, German Technical Cooperation/Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Improvement of the Steering Competence in the Water Sector Project) for consultations concerning the National Water Master Plan for Jordan; Dr Max Bobillier (Operations Director, LEMA/Ministry of Water) for discussions concerning upgrading the water network of Greater Amman; and staff of the Greater Amman Municipality GIS and Planning Departments for background information on urban planning and residential land issues in Greater Amman.

Equally valued have been the many residents of Jordan who generously gave up time to help with our research. We are especially grateful to those households in Greater Amman, and farmers in the Jordan Valley and Wadi Faynan who provided interviews as cited in Chapters 24, 26, 27 and 28 of this volume. The farmer interviews would not have been possible without the translation assistance from a number of individuals to whom we are grateful. The WLC archaeological and hydrological work in Wadi Faynan (Chapters 12, 14, 15) was only possible through the help and support provided by our friends in the local Bedouin communities, notably Abu Fawwaz, Abu Sael and Juma Ali Zanoon. We would also like to thank Juma Ali Zanoon for generously allowing the authors of Chapter 23 to take sediment samples from his tents, and to Haroun al-Amarat who provided translation. We are also grateful to the Maayah family from Madaba for their warm welcome to Claire Rambeau and support of her work in the vicinity of the Dead Sea region and Beidha.

We are grateful to the CBRL for providing administrative and logistical support, especially with regard to fieldwork in Jordan. We would particularly like to thank Professor Bill Finlayson, in his role as Director of the CBRL, for facilitating permits for archaeological and geological sampling of sites, and the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, for having awarded those permits.

We have benefited greatly from the support and advice of numerous other academics and bodies outside Jordan and our own University, to whom we are grateful: the Israeli Meteorological service for providing the daily data for rain stations along the Jordan River referred to in Chapters 2, 4, 5, 10 and 13; David Hassell, David Hein and Simon Wilson (Hadley Centre) for their invaluable assistance and advice on regional modelling, and for providing lateral boundary conditions as used in Chapter 4; Michael Vellinga (Hadley Centre) for providing the sea surface temperature data used to calibrate the slab ocean model in Chapter 3; Yuval Bartov (Colorado School of Mines), Stephen Calvert (University of British Columbia). Kay-Christian Emeis
(Institute for Biogeochemistry and Marine Chemistry), Mebus Geyh (Nidersächsisches Landesamt für Bodenforschung) and Angela Hayes (University of Limerick) for contributing data to Chapter 6; Professor Fabrice Monna (University of Burgundy) for his help regarding the ongoing analyses of the Dead Sea peaty sediments; Frank Farquharson and Helen Houghton-Carr (Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Wallingford) for allowing the authors of Chapter 12 access to hydrological records in their overseas archive; Steve Savage (Arizona State University) for allowing the authors of Chapter 17 access to the raw data of the JADIS database; Yehuda Dagan and the staff at the Israeli Antiquities Authority for discussing survey methodology in Israel with regard to Chapter 17; Paul Valdes (Bristol University) for access to the Bristol University BRIDGE Climate Change data for Chapter 18 and advice regarding palaeoclimate modelling; Professor J. Rose (University of Arkansas) for enabling access to skeletal remains for Chapter 20; Dr Stephen Bourke and Dr I. Kehrberg (University of Sydney) for advice regarding the analysis of skeletal remains from Jordan for Chapter 20; Dr Carol Palmer (CBRL) and Dr Mark Nesbitt (Kew Gardens) for advice on setting up the crop growing experiments described in Chapter 21; Dr Mohammed al-Najjar, Dr Douglas Baird (University of Liverpool), Graham Philip (University of Durham) and Alan Simmons (University of Nevada) for allowing the authors of Chapter 23 permission to sample their archaeological sites; Anson MacKay (University College London) for advice on using Canoco for Chapter 23.

We are grateful to Elsevier for allowing permission to republish a WLC paper from the *Quaternary Science Reviews* (2006, 25: 1517–1541) as Chapter 6 of this volume. We acknowledge the support of Stuart Robinson by a Royal Society University Research Fellowship. With regard to our academic colleagues at the University of Reading, we would especially like to thank those who have advised on the climate modelling: Lois Steenman-Clark and Jeff Cole of NCAS-Climate for advice on high performance computing, and Kevin Hodges of ESSC and the University of Reading for giving permission for the authors of Chapters 2, 3 and 4 to use his storm tracking software, and providing support and advice; Charles Williams for useful discussion throughout the project and help with setting up the regional climate model; Tim Woollings and Paul Berrisford for their contributions to the analysis during the early part of WLC.

The project has been fortunate in having the support of clerical and technical staff from the University of Reading. We would especially like to thank Jane Burrell, the WLC project administrator, Chris Jones and Cheryl Foote (University of Reading), and Penny Wiggins and Nadja Qaisi (Council for British Research in the Levant) for administrative support. Tina Moriarty, John Jack and Emilie Grand-Clément prepared samples for the Beidha study (Chapter 16); Ian Thomas carried out the spatial analysis of water quality data described in Chapter 12, while Anne Dudley and Dave Thornley carried out the water sample analysis described in that chapter; Ambroise Baker, Sarah Elliott, Kim Carter and Geoff Warren processed the soil and water samples described in Chapter 21; Tina Moriarty and Paul Chatfield advised on the sample processing and statistics described in Chapter 22; Bruce Main set up the mathematical model described in Chapter 24; We are especially grateful to Sophie Lamb who helped to prepare all of the illustrations for this volume, and to our copy-editor Lindsay Nightingale.

Finally, we would like to thank the four academics who were our ‘critical friends’ throughout the project, attending our annual meetings and providing immensely constructive advice: Professor Richard Bradley (Archaeology, University of Reading), Professor Robert Gurney (Meteorology, University of Reading), Professor Neil Roberts (Physical Geography, Plymouth University) and Professor Tony Wilkinson (Archaeology, Durham University).