Introduction

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From the highland springs of eastern Anatolia to the shifting shores of the Aegean and the marshes of the Cilician Plain, water has always shaped the human and ecological landscapes of Anatolia. As its title indicates, this volume explores holistically the many *Aquatic Worlds of Anatolia*—not only as natural environments but as cultural, political, and imaginative spaces. Rather than treating rivers, lakes, seas, and other aquatic systems as passive backdrops to historical processes, the chapters assembled here approach them, and the lifeworlds they bring forth, as active agents in the making of Anatolia's pasts, presents, and futures.

Anatolia—situated at the confluence of continents and empires—has long been defined by its hydraulic complexity. It is a region where water flows have nourished imperial ambitions, enabled mobility and exchange, and given rise to local cosmologies. Yet it is also a space where water scarcity, control, and contestation have generated long-standing patterns of social organization, religious practice, and environmental interaction. Bringing together historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and geographers, this decidedly inter-disciplinary volume interrogates the multiple meanings and materialities of water in Anatolia, from prehistory to the modern era. It traverses scales and specialisms, tracing how imperial schemes, sacred springs and seasonal floodplains, maritime trade, freshwater rituals and nationalist myths have defined ways of life, memory, and political authority. Taken together, these studies reflect a growing scholarly recognition of aquapolitical entanglements: the ways water not only sustains human life but also inscribes symbolic imaginaries, ideological horizons, and ecological limits in its ever-changing shades of blue.

In placing Anatolia at the center of inquiry, this volume offers a distinct contribution to wider conversations on environmental history, the technopolitics of infrastructure, and the spatial humanities. By charting the deep and varied histories of aquatic life-worlds, it seeks to situate water not as a universal medium, but as a regionally embedded substance, always shaped by—and shaping—the particular terrains, temporalities, and tensions of a particular place. Our intent is to bring together researchers engaged in the study of the Anatolian past from an aquatic perspective, placing at the center of the analytical frame the many seas, rivers, lakes, and wetlands, which make up the space but remain too often overlooked in the writing of its history. Indeed, the very idea of Anatolia, whether as seen from Turkey or elsewhere, tends to be associated with *land* and its many attributes—the figure of the peasant, the pure language, the ideal village, the terroir, the national territory, etc. In fact, many of these symbols connote places even deeper inland in central Asia, farther and farther away from the aquatic landscapes—sometimes veritable seascapes and riverscapes—that define Anatolia intimately.

In contrast to this conventional view, we propose that Anatolia's particular space, probably more than most geographical units, has been profoundly marked, indeed forever scarred, by the aquatic element: water delineated its perimeter and constituted its body. A quick glance at the world map provides a glaring, if also somewhat naïve, insight. Anatolia appears like an island-continent, completely encircled and per-

meated by waterways: the Mediterranean Sea to the south, the Black Sea to the north, the Aegean and Marmara Seas along with the Straits to the west, Lake Van and the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates to the east, and then the many rivers, lakes, and marshes that permeate its continental mass. For millennia, these many waterways determined the nature of that peculiar place. They sustained life upon the land, and through them, this land helped sustain life elsewhere, as a source of wheat, timber, tobacco, wool, tea, and much else.

From the ancients' cries of "*Thalatta, thalatta*" (as per Xenophon) to the competing Greek and Turkish nationalist, as well as British, French, and Italian colonialist, claims over Anatolia, seas, coasts, lakes, and rivers have featured prominently in the everyday life of its many peoples and ideas. A few examples should suffice: the Sakarya River played a key role in the history of the ancient site of Gordion (where Alexander the Great cut through the famous knot), and it also featured centrally in the Turkish war of independence; the Bosphorus is as conspicuous in ancient geography and mythology (resonating with the names of Io and Jason, Chares and Darius) as it is in modern politics (notably, but not only, in the famous Montreux Convention). Moreover, it is crucial to keep in mind that the division we often take for granted may not be so neat when analyzed further in depth—the legendary cosmopolitan and outward-looking cities on the coast (e.g., Istanbul, Izmir, etc.), for example, were also intimately connected to and dependent upon the supposedly traditional and inward-looking areas farther inland.

The aquatic lens is still too rarely used to understand the history of Anatolia. Building upon the new oceanic and environmental turns in the humanities, this volume brings together archaeologists, historians, and other scholars of various periods from the Bronze to the Digital Age to explore the history of a liquid Anatolia, not envisioned in direct opposition to the land, but rather in a kind of relational hybridity that defies easy categorization. Where a river ends and the sea begins, where coastal waters and the shore separate, is often more complicated than first meets the eye. In other words, what is aquatic and what is terrestrial is not always easy to define, particularly as subsidence, alluviation, and other natural phenomena inexorably shift any boundaries we create. Even further, although water often serves as a symbolic boundary of sorts, it also usually connects rather than divides its various shores and banks. A focus on the aquatic does not imply a retreat to any sort of geographic or environmental determinism, for by aquatic here we have in mind the interlacements of water with power, development, spirituality, transportation, irrigation, identity, and boundary-making, among other realms at the crossroads of the human, the social, and the natural sciences. The objective is likewise to follow recent works on the prehistory of Anatolian and Mediterranean rivers and seas in transcending the simple dichotomies between the terrestrial and the aquatic, freshwater and seawater, prehistory and history.

Aquatic Worlds of Anatolia stands at the fulcrum of a recent oceanic reorientation, or "turn," in the humanities and social science. This new current, in tandem with the equally significant environmental and spatial turns, have sought to rediscover a form of materialism that does not take the "material" dimension (nature, the environment, geography, society, the economy) for granted. Rather, spatiality here is engaged directly as a part of the realm of inquiry, so that environmental and geographical forces, social and personal relations, cultural and political formations, linguistic and conceptual traditions all intersect in complex ways and contribute to the making of a relational, plural, and dynamic historical process. Within this general framework, the (re-)discovery of the centrality of seas, oceans, lakes, and rivers presided over a profound transformation of the disciplines.[1] It was manifest already

1 For a deeper genealogy of the focus on seas in history, see Alexis Wick, *The Red Sea: In Search of Lost Space* (Oakland: The University of California Press, 2016), especially chapter 5: "Thalassomania: Modernity and the Sea."

in a handful of anthropological studies around the Pacific Basin in the first half of the twentieth century, such as Branisław Malinowski's study of the Trobriand Islanders.[2] Scholarly momentum increased when Fernand Braudel reversed the conventional roles of subject and object in the Mediterranean.[3] Rather than people, Braudel placed the liquid entity as central actor of the historical account and thus successfully contested nationally dictated, culturally inflected, and territorially bounded historiography. Since then, there has been a blossoming of new historical, sociological, geographical, and anthropological studies of people and the seas around them. For example, K. N. Chaudhuri's study of the Indian Ocean appeared in 1985, followed by Anthony Reid's two volumes on the islands of southeastern Asia in 1988 and 1993.[4] Soon after, Martin Lewis and Kären Wigen, in their *Myth of Continents*, and in a subsequent article in 1999, argued that the seas embody a new spatial hierarchy around the globe.[5] Paired with the oceanic turn's revisionist character, this new approach, with its emphasis on the interconnectivity and entanglement of peoples, places, ideas, and goods directly challenged traditional nation-state paradigms fixated on territorial ambitions. And the thesis clearly contrasted with the myth of pristine origins and the centrality of nationalist ideologies. Simultaneously, the pluricultural hues of port cities and their polyglot communities began to outshine the monochrome lens of the central state and the ethnolinguistic specificity of landlubbers. Indeed, the sea was not a pristine resource or an unsullied environment; the colonialist and capitalist histories of the Atlantic by Paul Gilroy and David Armitage demonstrated this, as did, even more emphatically, Philip Steinberg's *The Social Construction of the Ocean* in 2001.[6] The Mediterranean Sea's deep history and rich body of scholarship has been prevalent within this reorientation as well, undoubtedly prompted by Braudel's *La Méditerranée* from 1949.[7] Since 1972, and the book's publication in English, dozens of studies on the sea as a geographic and conceptual space have appeared, such as Sarah Arenson's 1990 *Encircled Sea*, David Abulafia's 2003 *The Mediterranean in History*, Nicholas Purcell and Peregrine Horden's 2000 *The Corrupting Sea*, and William Harris' 2006 *Rethinking the Mediterranean*.[8]

This volume boldly builds on these valuable precursors. It questions how Anatolia may be defined as a place with riverine, lacustrine, and maritime spaces of culture, politics, and the imagination but also why the application of this aquatic perspective in Anatolia has been com-

2 Among many publications on this fieldwork and theme, the most compelling is no doubt the famous *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (London: Routledge, 1922).

3 Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1949).

4 K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Anthony Reid, ed., *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680*, volumes I and II (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988, 1993).

5 Martin Lewis and Kären Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Martin Lewis and Kären Wigen, "A Maritime Response to the Crisis in Area Studies," *The Geographical Review* 89, no. 2 (Apr. 1999): 161–68.

6 Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); David Armitage, "The Red Atlantic," *Reviews in American History* 29 (2001): 479–86; Philip Steinberg, *The Social Constrution of the Ocean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

7 Braudel, *La Méditerranée*.

8 Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Siân Reynolds (Berkeley: Uiversity of California Press, 1972); Sarah Arenson, *The Encircled Sea: The Mediterranean Maritime Civilisation* (London: Constable, 1990); David Abulafia, ed., *The Mediterranean in History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003); Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000); William Harris, ed., *Rethinking the Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

paratively rare within the broader scholarly trend. Certainly, Ömür Harmanşah's *Of Rocks and Water* broached the topic in 2014, placing Anatolian aquatic spaces within a broader prehistoric context spanning Iran to Mesoamerica.[9] Soon after, Bilkent University hosted the *Anatolian Rivers between East and West: Axes and Frontiers* workshop;[10] it is worth noting that Anca Dan, one of the co-organizers of that workshop on Anatolian rivers, was a participant in the symposium that was at the origin of this volume, as well. Yet, as we incorporate their ideas, initiative, and thinking, we also ask what else might be done. Data from partially and completely-submerged archaeological sites along the Anatolian coast have been the subject of investigations for decades, and similar work in the region's lakes has begun more recently. So, how can the theorization and interpretation of this corpus transcend its conventional treatment? How can agendas foregrounding the aquatic spaces of Anatolia, rather than relegating them to passive backdrops for historical processes, be engaged and enacted? As the chapters assembled here demonstrate, the region's aquatic or hydraulic complexity has nourished imperial ambitions, enabled mobility and exchange, and catalyzed local cosmologies. From the lifeworlds that it brings forth, this volume hopes to demonstrate that water is an active agent in the making of Anatolia's pasts and presents.

It happens—and this is no coincidence—that the oceanic turn also coincides with a shift towards a post-national (some have even suggested a post-colonial) approach to archaeology, history, and, yes, politics in the region. The sound instinct behind this trend is to get beyond the tendency to project backwards onto the distant past differences which are in fact quite recent (such as national identity, racial distinctions, or territorial borders). The internal and external boundaries of Ottoman or Byzantine, not to speak of Roman or Hittite, lands, like those of other such imperial formations, were far more fluid than they have become in their successor states.

In this volume, we take this rediscovered (if relative) fluidity as an opportunity for thinking about the history of Anatolia and its many aquatic worlds without indulging in geographical fatalism or cultural essentialism, yet without losing sight of the centrality of both place and tradition for meaning-making and life-building. This is ever more urgent in a region, indeed a world, where social and ecological collapse are knocking at the door.

Interdisciplinary, our approach brings into dialogue insights from archaeologists, historians, geographers, political scientists, and anthropologists. It is also deeply diachronic, as we move from the Bronze to the Digital Age. This broad perspective enables us both to confirm and to nuance the premise of this volume, namely that water has always been central to Anatolia and its communities. Three seas surround the peninsula, making the latter an "island-continent," one dotted with over 50 natural lakes and drained by over 100 rivers, to the point where—as Gelina Harlaftis reminds us in her contribution—all the subfields of hydrology can find here ample material to work with: thalassology, or the study of the seas, limnology, the study of lakes, potamology, the study of rivers, and also aktology, the study of coasts. Yet the various communities of Anatolia have never considered water as a simple biological or economic resource. It has also been simultaneously perceived, in N. İlgi Gerçek's words, as a "life-sustaining, cathartic, therapeutic, and conductive substance" that called for modalities of interaction exceeding the purely utilitarian or managerial. Even nowadays, practically reduced, as it has been, to what Caterina Scaramelli calls here an "H_2O abstraction," water has not been fully deprived of the multiple cultural and spiritual meanings it once bore in the premodern era.

This resilience of what could be called, as an antiphrasis to Max Weber's famous expres-

9 Ömür Harmanşah, ed., *Of Rocks and Water: Towards an Archaeology of Place* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2014).

10 See http://bilnews.bilkent.edu.tr/workshop-explores-the-role-of-ana/.

sion, the aquatic "enchantment" in Anatolia is not conducive to a chronological organization of the book in the conventional sense. Rather, the progression can be conceived as a series of four concentric circles orbiting around the common epistemological goal of challenging conventional representations of Anatolia as largely continental. The chapters by Müge Durusu-Tanrıöver and Faisal Husain constitute the widest of these circles: each of them confronts the *longue durée* assumptions about Anatolia and its relation to water. Opening the volume, Durusu-Tanrıöver's contribution attributes common understandings of the Hittite Empire (seventeenth–twelfth century BCE) as a landlocked polity to an overreliance on state archives. She uncovers instead a decidedly "waterborne" and "water-dependent" Hittite Empire that emerges once local perspectives, for example that of Kizzuwatna on the Cilician coast, are integrated. Conversely, in his chapter, Husain suggests that representations of the Tigris and Euphrates as vital rivers for Anatolia may be anachronistic. He argues that until the mid-nineteenth century and the development of steamships, which enabled upstream navigation of the Tigris and the Euphrates, Anatolia was certainly essential to the two legendary rivers, but the reverse was not true. Societies that inhabited the region did not need to rely so much on them for pastoralism or agriculture because alternative sources of water abounded; indeed, Anatolia was and remains one of the "wettest regions of the Middle East." This is a timely invitation not to apply current strategic thinking about "natural resources" to fundamentally different models from the past.

The second-widest circle of contributions examines the dialectic of water and political power in the history of Anatolia. Gelina Harlaftis and Akın Sefer each highlight the crucial importance of the sea in possessing and spreading the Ottoman Empire's economic and political power. Contrary to the traditional but now increasingly contested opposition between, on the one hand, European seaborne empires and the Ottoman, allegedly land-based, one, both authors show how administrators soon understood the importance of transforming the latter into a credible thalassocracy. Gelina Harlaftis takes seriously the proposal to consider Anatolia "as an island," noting, in passing, that the so-called "Anatolian Fleet" constituted, in 1890, 20% of the total Ottoman fleet. Similarly, Akın Sefer examines the spill-over effects in terms of the economy and labor of developing the Ottoman navy, a process that tightly fastened the resources of the hinterland to those of what officially became the "coastal districts" of the Empire.

In the same vein, Antonis Hadjkyriacou sheds light on a history of the Greek Independence War penned by a Turkish navy officer in 1944 at a time when the young Turkish Republic's strategic orientations were decidedly terracentric. He argues that this book, which presented the Greek "Rebellion" as a "war won on land and lost at sea by the Ottomans" became the founding block of Turkey's recent maritime expansionist claims, encapsulated in the doctrine of the Blue Homeland.

The degree to which water plays a role in the articulation of collective identities is the thread connecting a third series of chapters. Echoing Durusu-Tanrıöver's invitation to rethink the significance of water in the Hittite Empire, N. İlgi Gerçek outlines the importance for the subjects of that polity of "water and bodies of water, such as rivers, springs, creeks, and ponds and in the construction and perception of [their] sacred and ritual landscapes." In this sense, water, argues Gerçek, served as a gateway to different worlds and different temporalities. Likewise, Jean-François Pérouse investigates the significance of choosing Ankara—a city conceived as continental and yet seated at "the base of a hydrographic convergence zone where 15 different streams meet"—as the capital of Turkey in the articulation of a new national sense of self. In the same line of argument, Ahmet Conker suggests that the current resistance to the state's development of hydroelectrical plants and dams in southeastern Turkey is not merely economic or political in the conventional sense of the term. It is about confronting the state's hydropolitics, namely the coerced redesigning of the relationship between local people and water.

While continuities can be observed in the relations between Anatolian communities and the aquatic, a consensus seems to emerge through all contributions around the transformative power of modern capitalism and its enforcer, the bureaucratic nation-state. This is specifically addressed in the last two chapters of this volume, constituting the final concentric circle mentioned above. Through her research on the Kızılırmak River Delta, Caterina Scaramelli suggests that successfully separating water from land, sacrificing wetlands for channeled waterways, served to legitimize modern state-making, as the newly established Turkish Republic reclaimed marshes to provide land for the resettlement of refugees coming from southeastern Europe. Such efforts could not, however, entirely eliminate wetlands, a liminal world characterized by a "gendered labor of mud maintenance." In the closing chapter of this volume, Christina Luke calls for a mobilization of archaeological and textual evidence to reimagine the "idea of Paradise" that originally was Lake Marmara and reconstitute it as a realm at once human, botanical, and animal. Following the construction of the Gördeş and Demirköprü Dams, the lake became gradually desiccated and was deserted by its aquatic myths and deities. Luke's contribution, and hopefully this entire volume, should thus constitute an invitation to reconsider water, as we once did in the premodern era, as "ontologically multiple" (Scaramelli), reinvest it with its multiple cultural and perhaps even spiritual meanings, and reimagine relations with oceans, seas, lakes, and rivers as transcending the crassly predatorial.