

# Conference

**Assessing the Fluvial  
Anthropocene. Agency,  
Materiality and Culture  
in Eastern European  
Hydroscaapes**

**Leipzig, 2-3 May 2024**



**Leibniz Institute for  
the History and Culture  
of Eastern Europe**



**Leibniz Institute for  
EAST AND SOUTHEAST  
EUROPEAN STUDIES**

# Assessing the Fluvial Anthropocene. Agency, Materiality and Culture in Eastern European Hydroscaapes

The world's waters are a powerful historical force in their own right, and their materiality puts the predominance of human agency into question. Recent historiography presents a variety of trans-disciplinary paradigms like nature-culture, environmental systems, or socio-natural sites. They creatively frame societal changes and anthropogenic constants through time, in rare cases even offering a *longue-durée* perspective that leads from antiquity to the Anthropocene. In this contested 'age of humans', whose agency is considered a geophysical force, water has become ever more coveted as a commodity with conflicts ensuing over its accessibility. Here, much is still to be learned about water management in a diachronic approach that contrasts the ideas and ideals of empires, nation states and international institutions through (proto-)capitalist and socialist regimes in a world connecting.



# Thursday, 2 May 2024

**14:00–14:30 Opening Remarks**

**14:30–16:00 Leipzig on Water**

Sophie Lindemann (Leipzig): Reconstructing the Medieval Water City of Leipzig through Archival Sources, Old Maps, Toponyms and Archaeological Finds

Niels Lohse (Leipzig): De Aquis Lipsiensibus. Drinking Water Supply and Quality in Early Modern Leipzig

Hannes Raßmann (Hamburg): Drought in the Water City. Linking Historic Floodplain Use, Water Management and Ecological Restoration in Leipzig

**16:00–17:00 Heritage vs. Resource Exploitation in Urban Spaces and Beyond**

Matthias Hardt (Leipzig): Mills, Millraces and Weirs on the Elbe, Havel and Spree in the High and Late Middle Ages

Michał Kępski (Poznań): Evolution of the Warta River Waterscape in Poznań. A Heritagisation Perspective

*17:00–17:30 Coffee Break*

**17:30 Keynote: Dirk van Laak (Leipzig):  
Water as Infrastructure. Assessing the Fluvial  
Anthropocene in the German West**

*Reception and Discussion over Dinner*

# Friday, 3 May 2024

## 9:00–10:30 Water-Infrastructure-Conflict

Lutz Häfner (Bielefeld): Living Water? The Moskva River as a (Re)Source of Both Death and Life in the 19th and early 20th Centuries

Andrei Vinogradov (Leipzig): Fish vs. Oil. Volga Fisheries and Industrial Pollution of the River in Late Imperial and Early Soviet Russia

Constantin Iordachi (Vienna): Taming the Danube. River Infrastructure and Imperial Rivalry at the Lower Danube

10:30–11:00 *Coffee Break*

## 11:00–12:30 Wetland Transformations

Nataša Henig Miščič (Ljubljana): The Ljubljana Marshes. Human Agency and the Attempts of Turning the Area into a Fertile Granary

Luminița Gătejel (Regensburg): Turning Wetlands into »Productive« Land. Riverbank Engineering in Interwar Romania

Artan R. Hoxha (Tirana/Pittsburgh): Conquering Hydroscares. Disciplining Waters, Gardening Nation, Engineering Inequalities. An Albanian Anthropogenic History

12:30–14:00 *Lunch Break*

## **14:00–15:30 Narratives-Imagination-Materialities**

Tracie L. Wilson (Munich): Haunting Rivers.  
Narratives and Materialities of the Oder

David Manolo Sailer (Vienna): In Disciplined Waters.  
Navigating the Fluid Histories, Narratives, and  
Sociopolitics of the Danube Region

Clemens Günther (Berlin): Micronesia in Macro-Per-  
spective. Environmental Crisis in Eastern European  
Travelogues on Oceania

*15:30–16:00 Coffee Break*

**16:00–17:00 Martin Schmid (Vienna):  
Hydroscares. Observations on the State of the  
Field**

**17:00 Matthias Hardt (Leipzig): A Guided Tour of  
Leipzig's Millraces in Past and Present**



The Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO) focuses its research on the regions between the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the Adriatic from late antiquity until the present day in a comparative perspective. We examine transformations and entanglements in a globalizing world. The institute thus seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of political, economic and social developments in the countries, societies and cultures of East Central and Eastern Europe.

**[www.leibniz-gwzo.de](http://www.leibniz-gwzo.de)**

The Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (IOS) is one of the largest and longest established research institutions of its kind in Germany – its foundation dates back to 1930. Among others, historians, economists and political scientists work at the IOS. The institute researches the history as well as the economic and political development of Eastern and Southeast Europe, with a focus on the period since around 1800. Its multidisciplinary research focuses on transnational and comparative issues.

**[www.leibniz-ios.de](http://www.leibniz-ios.de)**

**Venue:** GWZO, Specks Hof (Entrance A), 4th floor  
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This measure is co-financed by tax revenues as set out in the adopted budget of the Landtag of Saxony.