

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My interest in water arose in Wadi Fyanan, southern Jordan, during the excavation of a Neolithic settlement with Bill Finlayson, Sam Smith, Emma Jenkins and Darko Maričević. We had many conversations about water: the likelihood of a flash flood in the wadi, whether we had enough water for our flotation tanks, how the Neolithic inhabitants had managed their water supply, how the local Bedouin could survive with so little water to drink. Those conversations sparked a more general interest in water, and so my first thanks must go to Bill, Sam, Emma and Darko.

My interest was further developed in the 'Water, Life and Civilisation' project that I directed at the University of Reading between 2005 and 2010, generously funded by the Leverhulme Trust. That project was concerned with the climate, environment and cultural history of the Jordan Valley, bringing together some of the university's archaeologists, meteorologists, hydrologists, geoscientists and geographers to work on a single integrated study. I found this project was so rewarding that I was compelled to look at the bigger picture, the role of water in the entirety of the ancient world – or at least as much of it as I could cover. With the Leverhulme funds exhausted, I was forced to plough a lone furrow – or perhaps dig my own ditch would be a better metaphor. So I am most grateful to my colleagues on the Water, Life and Civilisation project for drawing me further into the world of water and its relationship to past climate and society. In particular, I would like to thank Emily Black, Stuart Black, David Brayshaw, Bill Finlayson, Rebecca Foote, Brian Hoskins, Emma Jenkins, Stephen Nortcliff, Rob Potter, Claire Rambeau, Bruce Sellwood, Julia Slingo, Sam Smith, Andy Wade and Paul Whitehead. Of these, I would like to especially thank Rob Potter whose studies of the inequalities of water distribution in modern-day Amman were particularly insightful and inspiring.