

# Water Management in Europe (12th-18th centuries)

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Water was a source of wealth which facilitated, fostered or brutally halted economic development in the Ancient Regime. Lack of hygiene meant that water was used less for drinking than other drinks, but as a raw material, source of energy, cooling, rinsing and cleansing agent, water was unequalled. It played a role in public and private relaxation and in health. Water also proved to be an ideal, safe and cheap means of transporting goods and ideas. Urban historians have long pointed to the enormous comparative advantage enjoyed by towns and regions whose favorable maritime or riverine location gave them access to cheap water-borne transport. But water just as often posed a threat to economic development and prosperity, whether due to its absence or its specific composition or level of pollution or to uncontrollable abundance. This duality is still present today in our modern, globalized society. While huge quantities of fresh, potable water are wasted in the West, free or cheap access to fresh and abundant water supplies remains a major challenge for millions of individuals on the planet. Major floods in different parts of the world regularly cause economic damage and endless human suffering.

With a Settimana devoted to the management of the water supply, excluding related topics as water consumption, water transport and the use of water in agriculture and industry, the International Institute of Economic History "F. Datini" is seeking to draw attention to this element that is as ubiquitous as it is seminal in the economic history of Europe.

## Publikacje

### Rozdziały od 2013 roku

- Brykała Dariusz: [Reconstruction of disposable water resources stored in mill ponds in Poland in the late 18th century.](#) [w]: Gestione dell'acqua in Europa (XII-XVIII Secc.). Selezione di ricerche. Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2018 - s. 337-352 (Atti delle "Settimane di Studi" e altri Convegni; 49)