

EDITOR'S NOTE

This special issue of *Al-Muntaqa*, titled “Water Ways: Critical Studies in Gulf and Arab History”, features critical essays in Water Studies, focusing on cases from the Arabian Peninsula, Lebanon, and Palestine. Based on a conference held at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies on 8-10 February 2024, in collaboration with Rubaiyat Qatar and Qatar Museums, this issue features four essays presented at the conference and published in volume 50 of the journal *Omran*, complemented by an additional article, an Arab Opinion Index analysis, and a book review.

Guest editor and the conference co-organizer Ismail Nashef is Associate Professor in the Program of Sociology and Anthropology at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. Nashef provides an introduction to Water Studies as a growing field of intellectual inquiry, and discusses the original contributions of the essays selected for publication in *Al-Muntaqa*, arguing that “Collectively, they raise critical questions around water as a site of profound epistemological, theoretical, and methodological inquiry, in terms of materiality, links to time and place, the conditions that enable its production and critique, and the possibilities for developing it in relation to “dry land”, whether as an extension of or separate from it”.

In addition to the four essays selected, this volume includes an essay by Hussein Abdulmunim Amery, “The Litani as a Link: Toward a Better Reconstruction in Lebanon”, addressing the vital importance of the Litani River in Lebanon and the environmental challenges resulting from its severe pollution. Amery shows how Lebanon’s water crisis is deeply rooted in its sectarian political system, inadequate governance, and pervasive poverty, proposing effective water and land governance.

As usual, this issue also includes an analytical essay of data from the Arab Opinion Index provided by the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies, “Social Media’s Socio-Cultural Impacts: An Analysis of the 2022 Arab Opinion Index”. It examines the socio-cultural impacts of social media in Arab public opinion in 14 Arab countries, revealing that over two-thirds of respondents consider social media to have a positive societal and cultural impact, albeit to varying degrees.

The issue concludes with a book review in which Hichem Charfi reviews As-Saghira Ben Hamida’s *The History and Memory of the Sea in Modern Tunisia: Between the Oral and the Written*.