



## The Politics of Resources



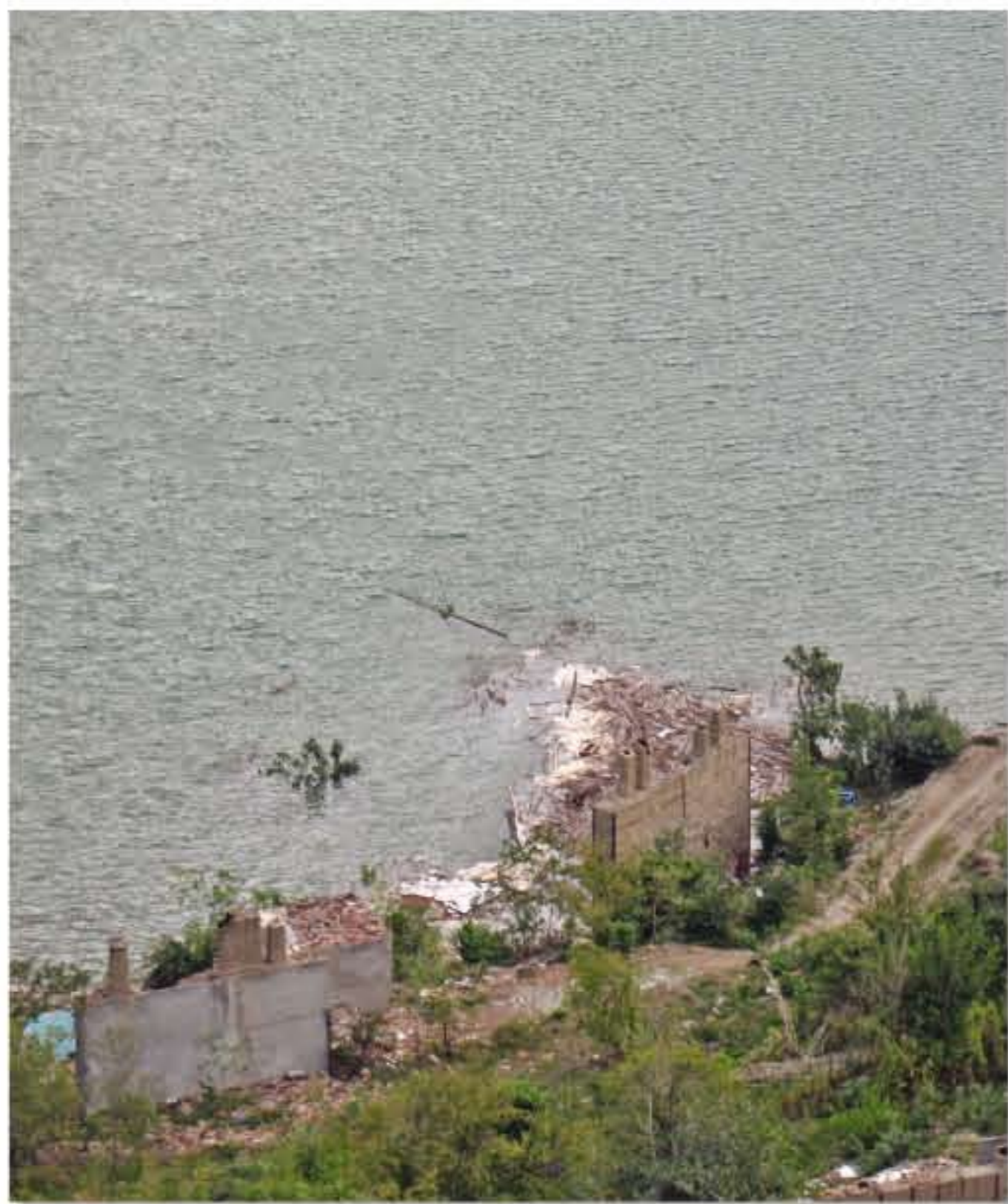
Water wheel for the irrigation of fields near the village of Zyrabulak, central Uzbekistan.

Source: Turkestanskij Al'bom, 1871/1872

### The Moral Economy of Land and Water in the Bukharan Emirate

Dr Jeanine Dağyeli

Landholding patterns and engagement with land and water in pre-colonial and colonial Central Asia are still poorly understood. This relates to questions of ownership and property rights but also of access, usufructuary rights, beneficial interest and the valorisation of land and water in economic as well as in spiritual terms. Resources and agriculture, and in particular water and certain crop plants, were sacralised in many ways. Water, crops and husbandry all had their respective patron saints. Different qualities of water were distinguished semantically and valued according to their inherent specificities but also to their role in the agricultural cycle. For farmers, water turned land into a resource while fallow land as such was not only regarded as sterile but also as home to all kinds of perilous spirits. Natural disasters like landslides or floods were often interpreted as divine intervention due to human moral decay. The moral economy of land and water and the spiritual mapping of agricultural labour not only included resources but also social and labour relations. Dependencies, hierarchical relationships and even bonded labour were usually masked by neighbourliness and relatedness.



Ruins of a village submerged by the Deriner Dam. Photo: Erdem Evren, 2013

### Fluid Destinies of Çoruh: Techno-Capitalist Development and the Politics of Temporality

Dr Erdem Evren

This project examines how the planning, imagining and construction of the future is endured by the local people in the context of a series of hydro-electricity projects realised in the eastern Black Sea region of Turkey. It will primarily look at two things: (i) the forms of commodification, dispossession and disposability that the state enables in trying to realise its vision of renewable and sustainable energy self-sufficiency; (ii) the often conflicting political, economic and religious means by which local inhabitants respond to their sacrifice in the name of progress and regional development that this vision entails. Building on the neo-Marxist scholarship on accumulation and commons, as well as the recent anthropological studies of affect, both the material and the intangible (spectral and psychic) aspects of nature's appropriation as resource extraction will be studied in unison. This study argues that the capitalist transformation of the rural regions in Turkey, as much as anywhere else, is contingent upon the complex relations between the logic of capital and individual attachments of social subjects.

The ethnographic research explores these matters in the Çoruh valley, Artvin where a total of 15 dams and 166 run-of-the-river type HEPPs are either planned to be constructed or already built on the main river and its tributaries. The project pays particular attention to the controversy surrounding the Yusufeli Dam project which, once finished, will lead to the submergence of the entire town centre and 19 villages, the relocation of at least 20,000 people and the destruction of all agricultural land. This project scrutinises the political and economic subjectivities that the new amalgamations of public and private, and legal and informal elicit, focusing on the issues of compensation, temporality and the remaking of political identities.