

Francesca de Châtel

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Profile

- Researcher, editor, author with in-depth knowledge of water issues in the Arab world and Mediterranean region
- Water expert researching political narratives of water and scarcity in Syria
- Experienced project manager and media trainer in diverse cultural settings
- Fully trilingual English, French, Dutch; Arabic, German, Hungarian, Italian

Editorial management

Editor-in-chief for the following publications:

2012 – 2013

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) & German Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR), Beirut, LEB

[Inventory of Shared Water Resources in Western Asia](#) (UN-ESCWA & BGR: Beirut, 2013)

- Edited 600-page Inventory according to UN editorial guidelines, including 27 chapters on shared surface and groundwater resources in Western Asia, introduction, overview and methodologies
- Contributed to design concept for the book and content creation for the project website

2010 – 2013

Revolve Water, Brussels, BE

The water section of Revolve, a Brussels-based quarterly magazine

- Won a WASH Media Award at Stockholm World Water Week 2012 for 96-page report [Water Around the Mediterranean](#)
- Launched interdisciplinary media platform to highlight key challenges facing Mediterranean water sector
- Established strategic partnerships with UfM, UNEP-MAP/Plan Bleu, EMWIS-SEMIDE, Arab Water Council

2007 – 2010

Syria Today, Damascus, SYR

Syria's first independent English-language monthly magazine

- Reorganized editorial production cycle to establish a smooth-running newsroom
- Implemented redesign of content and layout; doubled page count between 2007 and 2009
- Oversaw structural and graphic redesign of magazine's website
- Managed reorganisation of magazine's distribution system; launched international subscription service
- Provided ongoing on-the-job journalism training to young Syrian journalists

2009 – 2010

German Organisation for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Damascus, SYR

- Produced English-Arabic publication, *Managing Water for Sustainable Development, Modernisation of the Syrian Water Sector* for GTZ's Modernisation Programme for the Water Sector in Syria

Media training:

2010 **Syria Today Training Programme**, Damascus, SYR

- Developed long-term journalism training strategy at *Syria Today* for aspiring journalists and staff
- Worked with British Council to develop a range of courses; raised €15,000 for the 2010 programme
- Organised staff training 'Revisiting Journalism Basics' in October 2010 for staff journalists

2010 **From the Source Environmental Media Training**, Damascus, SYR

- Gave 4-day training for print, broadcast and photo journalists on water and the environment in Syria
- Raised €9,000 from the Netherlands Embassy and Netherlands Institute for Academic Studies in Damascus

2009 **Water and Migration**, Euro-Mediterranean Academy for Journalists, Goethe Institute Amsterdam, NL

- Gave workshop on environmental reporting in the Middle East for 20 print and broadcast journalists

* For a full overview of editorial and journalistic experience go to www.francescadechatel.com.

Selected books, research and publications

Books

Water Scarcity, Security and Democracy: a Mediterranean Mosaic (forthcoming 2014), Holst-Warhaft, G., De Châtel, F. & Steenhuis, T. (eds.), Ithaca, NY/Athens: GWP-Med & Cornell University

This interdisciplinary publication on water in the Mediterranean highlights the region's shared history, but also its diversity. The book's innovative design and publishing format aim to make it accessible to a broad audience.

Water Sheikhs and Dam Builders, Stories of People and Water in the Middle East (2007), De Châtel, F., New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers

Based on four years of research from Morocco to Iran and from Sudan to Israel, this general audience book explores the problems and paradoxes of water resource management in the Middle East and North Africa and exposes the roots of the current water crisis. After I translated the book into Dutch, Uitgeverij Contact (Amsterdam) published it under the title *Het water van de profeten* in 2005.

Research and publications

Syrian agriculture, drought and migration

Extensive research on the impact of long-term water mismanagement in Syria, including interviews with communities in the north-east and migrants in the south and in Lebanon; a review of water policies since the 1960s; and analysis of the links between environmental degradation and the start of the uprising in March 2011.

- Conference papers at GWP-Med Athens (GR), April 2013; Universität Osnabrück (DE), December 2012; Cornell University (USA), November 2011; 7th Int'l Water History Association (IWhA) conference (SA), June 2011
- Articles:
 - 'The Role of Drought and Climate Change in the Syrian Uprising: Untangling the Triggers of the Revolution', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 2014. DOI: 10.1080/00263206.2013.850076
 - 'Leaving the Land: The Impact of Long-term Water Mismanagement in Syria' in *Water Scarcity, Security and Democracy: A Mediterranean Mosaic*, Holst-Warhaft, G. & de Châtel, F. (eds.), GWP-Med & Cornell, forthcoming 2014

Damascus: The Death of the Garden of Eden

Uncontrolled urbanisation, population growth and resource mismanagement have had a devastating impact on water resources in the Syrian capital Damascus, a city historically famed for its rivers, greenery and fertile gardens.

- Conference paper at the 7th IWhA conference (SA), June 2011
- Article in *A History of Water 3(1). From Jericho to Cities in the Seas: A History of Urbanization and Water Systems*, Tvedt, T. & Oestigaard, T. (eds.), I.B. Tauris, forthcoming 2014

Baptism in the Jordan River: Immersing in a Contested Transboundary Watercourse

Geopolitical changes and regional conflict have reduced the holiest river in Christianity to a heavily polluted and contested transboundary stream. How do these changes affect believers' perceptions of the river's spiritual value?

- Conference paper at the 8th IWhA conference, Montpellier (FR), June 2013
- Articles: *WIREs Water*, 1: 219-227, DOI: 10.1002/wat2.1013; *Origins*, forthcoming 2014

'Out of its Depth? The State of Syria's Water Resources'

A 40-page special report on water management in Syria, with articles on transboundary water management, groundwater mining, pollution, the water crisis in the Damascus area, and an interview with the minister of irrigation. Published in *Syria Today*, January 2010

* For a full list of scientific publications, conference papers and lectures go to www.francescadechatel.com.

Education

2012-2014 PhD Natural Sciences

Institute for Science, Innovation and Society, Radboud University, Nijmegen, NL

Thesis: *Vanishing Water Landscapes in the Middle East: Public Perceptions, Political Narratives and Traditional Beliefs Surrounding Water and Scarcity in an Arid Region*

1998-1999 MA International Journalism, City University, London, UK

Thesis: *Building on Unstable Foundations, the Physical, Economic and Social Reconstruction of Lebanon*

1993-1997 **BSc General Architectural Studies (Hons)**, University of Bath, UK