

Preface

The 13 papers presented in this volume represent one outcome of the International Workshop on Erosion, Transport and Deposition Processes with Particular Reference to Semi-arid and Arid Areas, held in Jerusalem - Beer Sheva - Elat in March-April 1987. Another set of contributions to this Workshop has been published as *Catena Supplement 14*, 1989.

The Workshop was a joint activity of the Commission on Measurement, Theory and Application in Geomorphology (COMTAG) of the International Geographical Union, and the International Commission on Continental Erosion (ICCE) of the International Association of Hydrological Sciences. It represents the first formal collaboration between these two groups of geomorphologists and hydrologists, although there have been close contacts in the past. The lively discussions in the lecture hall as well as in the field reflected a growing feeling among hydrologists and geomorphologists that, over the past two decades, computer modelling of runoff and erosion processes has been losing much of the necessary basis demonstrable by field relationships. Real world information is essential to enable us to understand natural processes scientifically; often, if possible, with the aid of computer modelling, but sometimes also without it. This order of precedence, irrespective of the methods used, is exemplified in the diverse papers contained in this volume which, we hope, will contribute to narrowing the gap between theory and modelling of erosion and sedimentation processes and their actual behaviour in the real world.

Semi-arid and arid terrains provide the field scientist with a mixed bag of advantages and disadvantages for research. Difficult logistics and an often short and erratic database are balanced by the relative simplicity of physiographic structure and minimal interference from antecedent events. Although considerable progress has been accomplished in recent years, as, for example demonstrated during the field excursions of this Workshop, the study of many important aspects of erosion processes in deserts is still in its infancy. Much more needs to be done in order to form a coherent and generalized body of knowledge applicable to severe environmental problems associated with erosion and sedimentation in arid areas, especially in developing countries. We hope that this Workshop has contributed towards this aim and that it will be followed by an even closer cooperation, in future, between hydrologists and geomorphologists, not only on the topic of desert processes but also in other fields.

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