This collection shows how the marginal territory of the water’s edge has been represented in art in different places at various times and how such art contributed to the formation of cultural and national identities. Essays explore visual cultures of the Jordan and Vltava Rivers; the South African seaside resort of Durban; post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans; and the French Riviera, among other margins of river and sea.

Contents: Introduction: exploring the water’s edge, Tricia Cusack; PART I THE NATION AT THE EDGE: Our English Coasts: defence and national identity in 19th-century Britain, Christiana Payne; The Baltic’s edge: architecture and art in the service of Polish maritime policy, 1918–1939, Małgorzata Omilanowska; Hurricane Katrina as visual spectacle: Hurricane On The Bayou and the reframing of American national identity, Anna Hartnell; PART II HERITAGE BY THE COAST: The architecture and exhibits of Australian maritime museums: changing views at the water’s edge from Sydney and Perth, William Taylor; To the Lighthouse: sentinels at the water’s edge, Teresa Costa.

PART III CONFLICTS OF IDENTITY AT THE WATER’S EDGE: The Jordan river in ancient and modern maps, Rachel Havrelock; The fractured embankment: modernity and identity at the edge of the Vltava, Glyn Newman; Struggling for a day in the sun: the emergence of a beach culture among African people in Durban, Heather Hughes.

PART IV REGIONS OF LIMINALITY: The Jordan river in ancient and modern maps, Rachel Havrelock; The fractured embankment: modernity and identity at the edge of the Vltava, Glyn Newman; Struggling for a day in the sun: the emergence of a beach culture among African people in Durban, Heather Hughes.

PART V THE EDGE AS A TOURIST SETTING: Constructing the Donegal seaside at Rosapenna: imagining Norway in Victorian and Edwardian Ulster, Kevin J. James; Sunny snaps: commercial photography at the water’s edge, Colin Harding; Index.