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# Painting: Rescue during the 1847 Vienna flood

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Viennese city dwellers get rescued after massive floodings in 1847.

Painting by Leander Russ, 1847.
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Viennese city dwellers get rescued after massive floodings in 1847. (Painting by Leander Russ. © Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Bildarchiv Austria, Vienna.)

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> Rivers flood, some more regularly than others. The more infrastructure humans construct in floodplains, the more vulnerable to extreme hydrological events they become. Thus, when Danube floods hit Vienna, a Habsburg residence and the most important city of the monarchy, its waters regularly swept over lower parts of the city center and its expanding suburbs. High floods, such as

the *Allerheiligengießß* in 1787 or the great flood of 1847, arrived without warning. They caused massive damage to urban infrastructure and shocked residents. Protection measures, such as dykes, were destroyed and washed away by the force of the swollen river. During the most intense floods of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, city dwellers time and again had to retreat to their rooftops to save their lives, as reported in contemporary media.

—Michael Neundlinger

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