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Urban flood modeling using shallow water equations with depth-dependent anisotropic porosity

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Urban flood modeling using shallow water equations with depth-dependent anisotropic porosity

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Highlights

- Cases studies of urban flood modeling with the porous SWE are presented.
- The presented model allows the inundation of unresolved obstacles.
- Sensitivity of the drag force-based head loss formula is investigated.
- The model is very sensitive to the mesh, meshing strategies are suggested.
- The computational time decreased in average three orders of magnitude.

Abstract

The shallow water model with anisotropic [porosity](#) conceptually takes into account the unresolved subgrid-scale features, e.g. [microtopography](#) or buildings. This enables computationally efficient simulations that can be run on coarser grids, whereas reasonable accuracy is maintained via the introduction of porosity. This article presents a novel numerical model for the depth-averaged equations with anisotropic porosity. The porosity is calculated using the probability mass function of the subgrid-scale features in each cell and updated in each time step. The model is tested in a one-dimensional theoretical benchmark before being evaluated against measurements and high-resolution predictions in three case studies: a dam-break over a triangular bottom sill, a dam-break through an idealized city and a [rainfall-runoff](#) event in an idealized urban catchment. The physical processes could be approximated relatively well with the anisotropic porosity shallow water model. The computational resolution influences the porosities calculated at the cell edges and therefore has a large influence on the quality of the solution. The computational time decreased significantly, on average three orders

of magnitude, in comparison to the classical high-resolution shallow water model simulation.

- [Previous article in issue](#)
- [Next article in issue](#)

Keywords

Porous shallow water equations

Anisotropic porosity

Finite volume method

Case studies

1. Introduction

In shallow water modeling of river hydraulics ([Özgen et al., 2013](#), [Kesserwani and Liang, 2015](#)), urban flooding ([Liang, 2010](#), [Mignot et al., 2006](#)), [urban runoff](#) ([Cea et al., 2010](#), [Liang et al., 2007](#), [Liang et al., 2015](#)) and [rainfall-runoff](#) on natural environments ([Mügler et al., 2011](#), [Özgen et al., 2015](#), [Simons et al., 2014](#); [Viero et al. 2014](#)), the topographical features have a large influence on the numerical results. The availability of digital [elevation data](#) has increased significantly due to recent improvements in surveying technology, notably [laser scanning](#) and light detection and ranging (LIDAR) technologies, which provide high-resolution data sets at relatively low cost ([Gessner et al., 2014](#), [Gourbesville, 2009](#)). However, mainly due to computational constraints, incorporating these data sets into shallow water models is challenging ([McMillan and Brasington, 2007](#), [Dottori et al., 2013](#)). The difficulty arises from multiple scales in the physical processes. For example, in a small natural catchment with a scale of around a square kilometer, local depressions and [microtopography](#) with horizontal scales less than a square meter influence the [flow field](#) significantly ([Blöschl and Sivapalan, 1995](#), [Dunne et al., 1991](#); [Thompson et al.](#)). Similarly, in urban flood models the city may spread up to several hundred square kilometers but the flood flow can be diverted, slowed down or completely blocked by man-made structures, e.g. buildings, bridges or walls, whose characteristic scale are in meters. In order to accurately capture the effect of microtopography or buildings, they have to be included in the discretization. Due to the co-existence of multiple scales, this leads to extremely large computational mesh, which requires large data storage, large number of operations per time step, small time step size and thus large computational effort. In fact, the computational cost is inversely proportional to the third power of the cell size ([Kim et al., 2014](#)). Therefore, practical applications have to compromise between spatial accuracy and computational efficiency

([Lacasta et al., 2014](#)) and are often carried out on super-computers ([Smith and Liang, 2013](#)).

For super-computers, high-performance parallel computation methods on shared or distributed memory have been developed in literature ([Hinkelmann, 2005](#)) and very recently graphic processing units have been exploited for scientific computation (e.g., [Lacasta et al., 2014](#), [Lacasta et al., 2015](#), [Smith and Liang, 2013](#)).

A different approach to speed up simulations is to conceptually account for small scale ground variations without explicitly discretizing them ([McMillan and Brasington, 2007](#)). This allows to run the simulations on coarser meshes. In this context, the [shallow water equations](#) with [porosity](#) have been initially developed by [Defina et al., 1994](#), [Defina, 2000](#) to account for microtopography in partially inundated cells. Here, a single porosity is assigned to each cell, which represents the fraction of the cell that contributes to the flow. The porosity is calculated by a [distribution function](#), which returns the porosity depending on the water depth in the cell. The distribution function is defined for the whole domain. In [Viero et al. 2014](#), Defina's porous shallow water equations are applied to coupled simulations of surface and [subsurface flows](#) in natural catchments.

The porosity concept was also applied to urban flood modeling by [Hervouet et al. \(2000\)](#) to account for buildings. Significant contribution to the porosity concept in the context of urban flood modeling was made by [Guinot and Soares-Frazão, 2006](#), [Soares-Frazão et al., 2008](#), [Guinot, 2012](#). Because the buildings in urban flood models are usually not fully submerged during the flood event, the area available for the flow stays constant during the simulation. Consequently, most porous urban flood models assign a constant porosity to each cell which only depends on the fraction of the cell occupied by buildings. An exception is the urban flood model presented in [Henonin et al. \(2015\)](#), wherein the authors calculate the inundated area of each cell according to the water elevation and use it in the mass balance. Although the authors do not explicitly use porosity terms, the model in [Henonin et al. \(2015\)](#) is essentially equivalent to a single porosity model with a depth-dependent porosity. The same strategy for porosity calculation is followed in this work. Further studies regarding the shallow water equations with single porosity in the context of urban flooding were carried out in [Cea and Vázquez-Cendón, 2009](#), [Garrido et al., 2011](#), [Mohamed, 2014](#), [Soares-Frazão et al., 2008](#), [Velickovic et al., 2010](#). Single porosity shallow water models can not differentiate between spatial directions. The flow in all directions is governed by the same porosity. However, buildings in urban flood models usually have a directionality which leads to [preferential flow](#) paths of the water. Therefore, [Sanders et al. \(2008\)](#) introduced the anisotropic porosity shallow water model, wherein a volumetric

porosity inside the cell is defined to account for the fraction of the cell available for water. In addition an areal porosity is assigned to each cell edge which describes the conveyance there (Sanders' model). The equations were derived using the integral form of the shallow water equations, thus these equations can be solved only by a [finite volume method](#). Sanders' model was further investigated in [Kim et al., 2015](#), [Kim et al., 2014](#), [Schubert and Sanders, 2012](#). In [Özgen et al. \(2016\)](#) a modified version of Sanders' model that allows full submergence of unresolved topographic features by introducing a mutual dependency between water depth and porosity is derived. This article presents a numerical model to solve the equations derived in [Özgen et al. \(2016\)](#) on Cartesian grids. The main difference from Sanders' model is that submergence of unresolved topography leads to a different formulation of the porosities depending on the water depth in the cell. The main contribution of this work is the discussion on discretizing the porosity terms in the cell and at the edge and the illustration of the model's behavior via detailed case studies. In the present model, each cell and each edge are automatically assigned an individual porosity that depends on the water depth and the underlying topography. Thus, the model is automatically adjusted based on the computational mesh. The model performance is investigated in a theoretical test case. Then, case studies of [laboratory experiments](#) are presented to further investigate the model's behavior.

2. Governing equations

The two-dimensional [shallow water equations](#) with anisotropic [porosity](#) can be written in integral-differential form as:

$$(1) \partial \partial t \int \Omega i q d \Omega + \oint \partial \Omega i F n d r = \int \Omega i s d \Omega + \oint \partial \Omega * s * d r *$$

Here, Ω is the total base area of the control volume, $\partial \Omega$ is the boundary of the control volume, r is the path along the boundary $\partial \Omega$, $\partial \Omega *$ is the boundary between the fluid and the solid inside the control volume and $r *$ is the path along this boundary (cf. [Sanders et al., 2008](#), [Özgen et al., 2016](#)). i is the so-called phase function, defined as:

$$(2) i_{x,y} = 1, \eta_{x,y} > z_{b,x,y} \text{ else } 0$$

η is the water elevation, z_b is the bottom elevation, q is the vector of conserved variables, s is the source term vector, F is the flux vector and $n = n_x, n_y^T$ is the normal vector of the boundary, with n_x and n_y are the components of the normal vector in x - and y -directions of the Cartesian [coordinate system](#), respectively. [Fig. 1](#) illustrates the phase function, η and z_b . The vectors q and s are expressed as:

$$(3) q = h q_x q_y, s = i r s_b, x + s_f, x s_b, y + s_f, y$$

Here, $h = \eta - z_b$ stands for water depth, q_x and q_y are the unit discharges in x - and y -directions, respectively. ir is the mass source term, e.g. [rainfall intensity](#); $s_{b,x}, s_{b,y}$ are the bed slope source terms in x - and y -directions, respectively which account for variations in bottom, $s_{f,x}, s_{f,y}$ are the friction source terms in x - and y -directions, respectively:

$$(4) s_{b,x} = -gh \frac{\partial z_b}{\partial x}, s_{b,y} = -gh \frac{\partial z_b}{\partial y},$$

$$(5) s_{f,x} = -cf q_x q_x^2 + q_y^2 h^2, s_{f,y} = -cf q_y q_x^2 + q_y^2 h^2$$

cf is the Chézy [roughness](#) coefficient, which can be expressed via Manning's law:

$$(6) cf = gn^{2h-1/3}$$

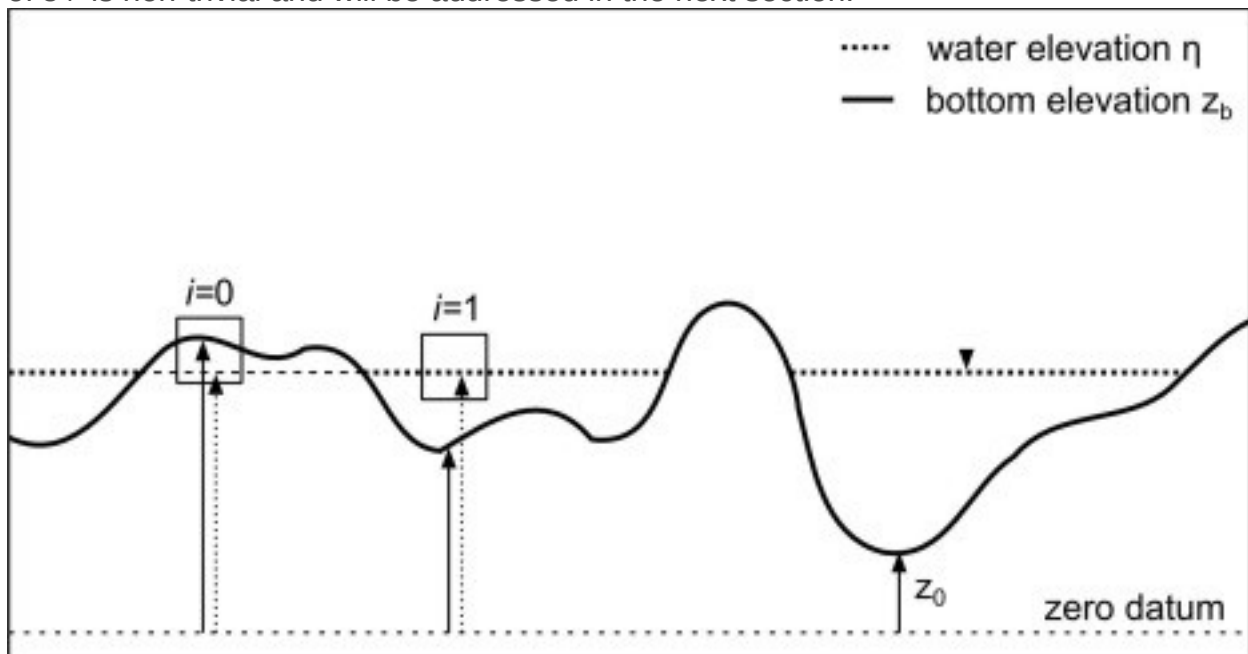
n is Manning's roughness coefficient and g is the gravitational acceleration. The flux vector is often split into its x - and y -component:

$$(7) F_n = f_{nx} + g_{ny}$$

f and g are defined as:

$$(8) f = q_x u q_x + 0.5gh^2 u q_y, g = q_y v q_x + 0.5gh^2 v q_y$$

Here, u and v are the velocities in x - and y -directions, respectively. Finally, s^* is the source vector accounting for [fluid pressure](#) along the interface $\partial\Omega^*$. The calculation of s^* is non-trivial and will be addressed in the next section.



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Fig. 1. Definition of phase function i , water elevation η (dashed), bottom elevation z_b (black) and zero datum z_0 in a vertical section through a control volume.

3. Numerical model

3.1. Finite volume formulation of the equations

The integral-differential form of the [shallow water equations](#) can be solved with the [finite volume method](#). However, the phase function i can not be evaluated explicitly in the finite volume cell, because the bottom elevation inside the cell is not resolved.

Therefore, the integral terms on the left hand side of Eq. (1) have to be calculated with the concept of [porosity](#).

In [Özgen et al. \(2016\)](#), the volumetric porosity is defined as:

$$(9) \phi = \int_{\Omega} (\eta - z_b) d\Omega = \int_{\Omega} \eta - z_0 d\Omega$$

The areal porosity is calculated as:

$$(10) \psi = \oint_{\partial\Omega} (\eta - z_b) dr = \oint_{\partial\Omega} \eta - z_0 dr$$

Here, z_0 is the elevation of the lowest point inside the control volume with regard to a datum. Both are illustrated in [Fig. 1](#). Evaluating the integral terms leads to modified flux and storage vectors ([Özgen et al., 2016](#)). Rewriting the line integral as a sum over the finite volume edges transforms Eq. (1) to:

$$(11) \partial_t \phi + \sum_k \psi_k F_k = \int_{\Omega} s d\Omega + \oint_{\partial\Omega} s * dr$$

k is the index of the path integral and r_k is the length of the integration path. The storage vector q in Equation 3 is rewritten as:

$$(12) \bar{q} = \bar{\eta} - z_0 \bar{u} - \bar{v} - z_0 \bar{v} - z_0$$

The bar over a variable indicates volume-averaged variables which are constant within the cell:

$$(13) \bar{\eta} = \int_{\Omega} \eta d\Omega / \int_{\Omega} d\Omega, \bar{v} = \int_{\Omega} v d\Omega / \int_{\Omega} d\Omega$$

If $i=0$ over the whole control volume, the averaging is not carried out and the volume-averaged variables are taken to be $\bar{\eta} = \eta$ and $\bar{v} = v$. The flux vector in Eq. (3) is rewritten as:

$$(14) F^n = \hat{u} \hat{\eta} - z_0 n_x + \hat{v} \hat{\eta} - z_0 n_y \hat{u} \hat{\eta} - z_0 n_x + 0.5 g \hat{\eta} - z_0 n_x + \hat{u} \hat{v} \hat{\eta} - z_0 n_x + \hat{v} \hat{v} \hat{\eta} - z_0 n_y + 0.5 g \hat{\eta} - z_0 n_y$$

The circumflex over a variable indicates area-averaged variables at the edge:

$$(15) \hat{\eta} = \int_{\partial\Omega} \eta dr / \int_{\partial\Omega} dr, \hat{u} = \int_{\partial\Omega} u dr / \int_{\partial\Omega} dr, \hat{v} = \int_{\partial\Omega} v dr / \int_{\partial\Omega} dr$$

As before, if $i=0$ over the whole edge the averaging is not carried out and all variables are taken to be nil. Then, Eq. (11) can be solved with a suitable time integration method.

3.2. Porosity computation

In order to calculate the porosities, the Probability Mass Function (PMF) of the unresolved bottom elevation inside the cell is calculated in the pre-processing step. The PMF is defined as the [probability density function](#) with discrete variables and can be computed by sampling the bottom elevation at a resolution much higher than the computational mesh. This assumes that the bottom [elevation data](#) is resolved at the

finer resolution than the computational mesh resolution. The PMF is calculated for each cell and each edge separately. In the context of this work, the PMF value of a certain elevation corresponds to the fraction of area below this elevation over the total area of the cell or the fraction of length of the edge below the specified elevation over the total length. Then, for any given water elevation η^- , the volumetric porosity ϕ can be calculated as:

$$(16) \phi_{\eta^-} = 1 - \eta^- \Omega \sum_i N_{\min(0, \eta^- - z_{b,i})} \text{PMF}_{z_{b,i}} \Omega_i$$

Here, i is the index of bottom elevation $z_{b,i}$. $\text{PMF}_{z_{b,i}}$ is the value of the PMF evaluated at $z_{b,i}$. In the present numerical model, the class index increases as the bottom elevation increases, i.e. the lowest bottom elevation corresponds to the smallest class index and the highest bottom elevation corresponds to the largest class index. N denotes the total number of classes. Similarly, the areal porosity ψ at one edge is computed as:

$$(17) \psi_{\eta^-} = 1 - \eta^- \Delta k \sum_i N_{\min(0, \eta^- - z_{b,i})} \text{PMF}_{z_{b,i}} \Delta k_i$$

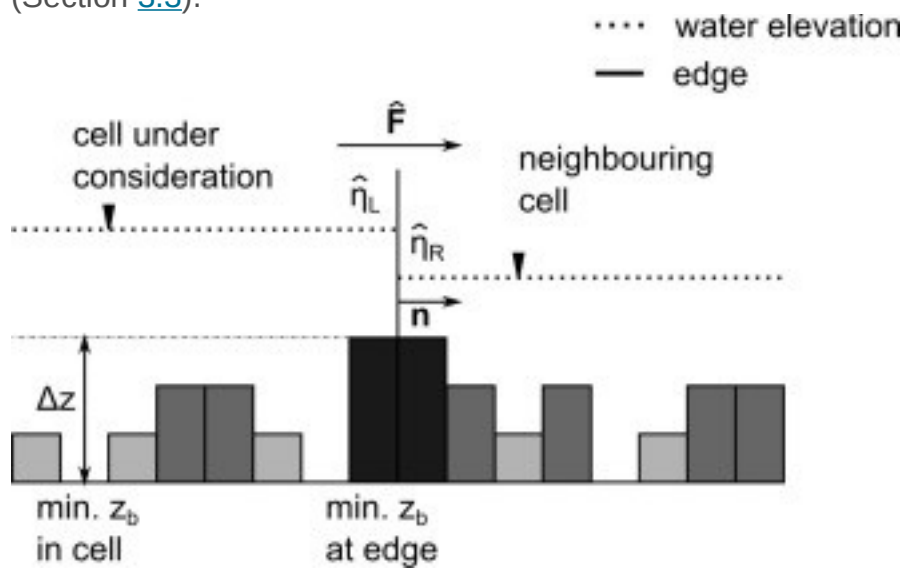
Δk is the length of the edge. The PMF for the edge is sampled from the subgrid cells adjacent to the edge under consideration. Because the adjacent neighbor cell also contributes to the porosity of the edge. The samples at the edges are modified as:

$$(18) z_{b,iL} = z_{b,iR}, \text{if } z_{b,iL} < z_{b,iR}; z_{b,iR} = z_{b,iL}, \text{if } z_{b,iL} > z_{b,iR}$$

Here, the superscripts L and R denote the left and right sides of the edge, respectively. The idea is to take clustering effects and cell blockage which have been reported in [Yu and Lane, 2006](#), [Yu and Lane, 2006](#) into account. The PMF is computed for each cell and edge once in the pre-processing step and is stored. Once the PMF is obtained, the mesh used for sampling is discarded and therefore the information of the high-resolution bottom elevation is not available anymore. The bottom elevation of each computational cell is set at the lowest value found from the high-resolution mesh. Additionally, the elevation at each edge is stored and used in the subsequent computation. The porosities are updated at the beginning of each time step according to Eqs. [\(16\)](#), [\(17\)](#). It is noted that in Equation [\(16\)](#), [\(17\)](#) each sample is weighted equally. This assumes that each sample represents an equal amount of area. This is easy to assume for either square-shaped or rectangular-shaped grid cells if the subgrid-scale elevations are evenly distributed. For a triangular cell, evenly distributed subgrid-scale bottom elevations would not represent equal areas and the equations must be further modified to account for this. One approach would be to perform a Voronoi-tessellation in each cell to calculate weights for each sample. In this study, only structured grids with square-shaped cells are used.

3.2.1. Choice of water elevation for areal porosity calculation

The areal porosity at the edge is calculated according to the water elevation at the edge. Because the edge is an interface between two neighboring cells, a choice between two water elevations has to be made to calculate the areal porosity, namely the water elevation at the left $\hat{\eta}_L$ and the water elevation at the right $\hat{\eta}_R$ of the edge. In this work, the upstream water elevation is chosen for porosity calculation. For example, if the case illustrated in [Fig. 2](#) is considered, the areal porosity ψ will be computed according to the water elevation on the left side of the edge $\hat{\eta}_L$. In [Fig. 2](#), \hat{z}_b is the bottom elevation at the edge. The calculation of \hat{z}_b is discussed in the next section (Section [3.3](#)).



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Fig. 2. Side view of two neighboring cells for the choice of the water elevation to calculate ψ , the cell under consideration is on the left side, water elevation is dashed line, definitions of $\Delta z, n, \hat{\eta}_L$ and $\hat{\eta}_R$.

3.3. Flux computation

The numerical scheme is a Godunov-type explicit finite volume scheme with second order MUSCL reconstruction ([van Leer, 1979](#)). Values at cell center are linearly extrapolated to the edges, whereby the slope of the extrapolation function is limited by a min-mod slope limiter ([Hou et al., 2012](#)). The reconstructed values are used to calculate the numerical fluxes over the cell edge by solving the Riemann problem at the edge using a Harten, Lax and van Leer approximate Riemann solver with the [contact](#) wave restored (HLLC) ([Toro et al., 1994](#)). As suggested in [Audusse et al. \(2004\)](#),

only $\hat{\eta}$, \hat{q} and \hat{h} are extrapolated. At wet-dry interfaces, the MUSCL reconstruction is omitted to ensure [numerical stability](#) ([Liang, 2010](#), [Hou et al., 2013](#), [Liang and Borthwick, 2009](#)).

The reconstruction of the bottom elevation at the edge differs slightly from most reconstructions (e.g., [Audusse et al., 2004](#), [Hou et al., 2013](#)). In a first step, the bottom elevation at the edge $z_{b,irec}$ is calculated as

$$(19) z_{b,irec} = \hat{\eta} - \hat{h}_i$$

In an additional second step the difference between the lowest bed elevation at the edge and the bottom elevation of the cell is calculated:

$$(20) \Delta z_i = z_{b,edge} - z_{b,icell}$$

$z_{b,edge}$ refers to the lowest elevation at the edge and $z_{b,icell}$ refers to the bottom elevation of the cell on the left or right side of the edge (cf. [Fig. 2](#)). Then, Δz_i is added to $z_{b,irec}$:

$$(21) \hat{z}_{b,i} = z_{b,irec} + \Delta z_i$$

The reconstruction carried out for the left and right side of the edge gives $\hat{\eta}_L, \hat{q}_L, \hat{h}_L, \hat{z}_{b,L}, \hat{\eta}_R, \hat{q}_R, \hat{h}_R, \hat{z}_{b,R}$. Hereinafter, the cell on the left side of the edge is assumed to be the cell under consideration. Then, the non-negative water depth reconstruction ([Audusse et al., 2004](#)) is carried out as follows: The bottom elevation at the edge is defined as:

$$(22) \hat{z}_b = \max(\hat{z}_{b,L}, \hat{z}_{b,R})$$

Water elevation on the left side of the edge and the bottom elevation at the edge are compared and the lower value is set as the new bottom elevation.

$$(23) \hat{z}_b = \min(\hat{z}_b, \hat{\eta}_L)$$

Water depths are reconstructed as:

$$(24) \hat{h}_R = \max(0, \hat{\eta}_R - \hat{z}_b) - \max(0, \hat{z}_{b,R} - \hat{z}_b), \hat{h}_L = \hat{\eta}_L - \hat{z}_b$$

The vector of velocities at the left and right sides of the edge ($\hat{v}_i = \hat{u}_i, \hat{v}_T$) are calculated as:

$$(25) \hat{v}_i = \begin{cases} 0, & \hat{h}_i < \epsilon \\ \hat{q}_i / \hat{h}_i, & \hat{h}_i \geq \epsilon \end{cases}$$

ϵ is a threshold to avoid division by 0 and further indicates whether a cell is considered wet or dry. In this work it is chosen $\epsilon = 10^{-6} \text{m}$. Finally, $\hat{h}_L, \hat{v}_L, \hat{h}_R$ and \hat{v}_R are used by the HLLC Riemann solver to compute the flux over the edge.

3.4. Source term computation

3.4.1. Bed slope and friction source term computation

In Eq. [\(1\)](#), three source terms have to be numerically solved: the bed slope source term, the friction source term and the solid-fluid interfacial pressure source term. The first two

source terms occur as a result of depth-averaging and can be found also in the classical two-dimensional shallow water equations. The last term results from the ground unevenness not resolved by the computational mesh and is discussed in [Sanders et al., 2008](#), [Özgen et al., 2016](#).

The bed slope source term can be written as

$$(26) s_b = 0 s_{b,x} s_{b,y}$$

where the definitions of the terms are given in Eq. (4). In [Valiani and Begnudelli \(2006\)](#), the divergence form for bed slope is presented, which transforms the bed slope source term within the cell into a flux term over its edges:

$$(27) \int_{\Omega} s_b d\Omega = \oint_{\partial\Omega} F_b n dr$$

The integral is evaluated and the line integral is approximated by the algebraic expression:

$$(28) \oint_{\partial\Omega} F_b n dr = \sum_k \psi_k r_k F^{b,k}$$

[Hou et al. \(2013\)](#) propose an extension of this approach to higher order accuracy by dividing the integral over the cell into integrals over subcells. This allows non-linear variations of bed elevation, which is suitable for the model presented in this work because separate bottom elevations are defined at the cell edges. The vector of bed slope flux at edge k is written as:

$$(29) F^{b,k} = 0 - 0.5 n_x g h_k + h^{-z} \hat{z}_{b,k-z} - 0.5 n_y g h_k + h^{-z} \hat{z}_{b,k-z}$$

Using Eq. (10), the evaluation of the integral in Eq. (28) over edge k in x -direction gives:

$$(30) \int_{\partial\Omega} 0.5 n_x g h_k + h^{-z} \hat{z}_{b,k-z} dr = -0.5 g \hat{z}_{b,k-z} \int_{\partial\Omega} k g i h_k + i h^{-z} dr = -0.5 g \hat{z}_{b,k-z} \psi_k r_k - z_0 r_k + \int_{\partial\Omega} k i h^{-z} dr$$

The latter integral in Eq. (30) is approximated with:

$$(31) \int_{\partial\Omega} k i h^{-z} dr \approx \psi_k h^{-z} r_k$$

The evaluation of the integral in y -direction is similar. Then, the evaluated bottom slope flux vector $F^{b,k}$ over the edge k can be written as:

$$(32) F^{b,k} = 0 - 0.5 n_x g \eta_k - z_0 + h^{-z} \hat{z}_{b,k-z} - 0.5 n_y g \eta_k - z_0 + h^{-z} \hat{z}_{b,k-z}$$

For the friction source term, the standard expression of the friction source vector as introduced in Eq. (5) is used. The term is discretized in a point implicit way as shown in [Simons et al. \(2014\)](#).

3.4.2. Solid-fluid interfacial pressure source term computation

The solid-fluid interfacial pressure source term treatment follows the modeling concept in [Sanders et al. \(2008\)](#). The term is split into a stationary and non-stationary part:

$$(33) \oint_{\partial\Omega} s^* s dr = \oint_{\partial\Omega} s^* s_{st} dr + \int_{\Omega} s^* s_{ns} d\Omega$$

The stationary part balances the pressure and flux terms as the flow converges to a stationary state and the non-stationary part results from the water elevation fluctuation inside the computational cell that can not be resolved ([Sanders et al., 2008](#)). The non-stationary term sns^* is integrated over the cell. In [Sanders et al., 2008](#), [Özgen et al., 2016](#), this term follows a generalized drag law proposed in [Nepf \(1999\)](#):

$$(34) \text{sns}^* = 0.5 c_D \bar{u}^{-2} + \bar{v}^{-2} c_D \bar{u}^{-2} + \bar{v}^{-2}$$

c_D is the dimensionless drag coefficient, which is calculated with:

$$(35) c_D = 0.5 c_{D0} a \cdot \min(h, z_{b\max} - z_{b\min})$$

The parameter a represents the projected width of the obstruction facing the flow per unit [planform](#) area and depends on the [angle of attack](#) and width of the obstacle ([Sanders et al., 2008](#)). c_{D0} is a reference drag coefficient obtained by calibration, and a is a modification coefficient. In theory, it is possible to determine a exactly from the geometry data and calibrate only c_{D0} , yet this is not done in this work. Instead, the model is calibrated using the product $c_{D0} \cdot a$. The reason for this is that calculating the angle of attack for the value of a during the simulation is not trivial. In addition, the value of c_{D0} depends on the [Reynolds number](#) and the shape of the obstacle. In [Nepf, 1999](#), [Sanders et al., 2008](#), it is suggested that the value of a should be estimated in a predictor step and then updated in a corrector step based on the flow values of the predictor step. This approach is not followed in this work, because it requires extra knowledge of the subgrid-scale obstacles beyond the porosity function, i.e. information about the shape and the directionality of the obstacles have to be stored. An additional challenge is that the values of a and c_{D0} depend on the water depth in the cell, as the geometry of the obstacles might vary in the vertical direction. The full assessment of the present approach requires additional research. Additionally, the value $c_{D0} \cdot a$ is assumed constant over the whole domain, because the cases investigated are relatively simple. However, each cell could also be assigned a separate $c_{D0} \cdot a$. This would allow a better representation of the heterogeneity in the domain, but the drawback is that the model calibration becomes very complicated and requires large quantities of data. This further suggests that a more precise definition of both a and c_{D0} is required. Overall, the calculation of the non-stationary term needs further research.

The stationary part of the interfacial pressure source term is essential, as it well-balances the scheme. Here, the vector of the stationary interfacial pressure source term is derived by evaluating the C-property of the scheme. This leads to the same formulation as in [Sanders et al. \(2008\)](#):

$$(36) \oint_{\partial\Omega} \text{sst}^* dr = \sum_k \psi_k F^*, k n_k r_k$$

with:

$$(37) F^{*,k} = 0.5h^{-2}n_k, x + 0.5h^{-2}n_k, y$$

The proof of C-property is trivial and omitted for sake of brevity.

3.5. Time integration

A two-stage total variation diminishing [Runge-Kutta method](#) ([Gottlieb and Shu, 1996](#)) is used. The values at next time step $n+1$ are calculated in two stages. The first stage is

$$(38) \phi_{n+1}^{\tilde{n}} q_{n+1}^{\tilde{n}} = \phi_n q_n - \Delta t \sum_k \psi_k n F^{\text{tot},kn} r_{kn} + \Delta t \phi_n (s_n + s_n^*, n) \Omega$$

and the final value is then calculated as

$$(39) \phi_{n+1} q_{n+1} = 0.5 \phi_n q_n + \phi_{n+1}^{\tilde{n}} q_{n+1}^{\tilde{n}} - \Delta t \sum_k \psi_k n F^{\text{tot},kn+1} r_{kn+1} + \Delta t \phi_{n+1}^{\tilde{n}} (s_{n+1}^{\tilde{n}} + s_n^*, n+1) \Omega$$

Here, $F^{\text{tot},k} = F^k - F^b, k - F^*, k$. The first term of the vector $\phi_{n+1} q_{n+1}$, i.e. $\phi_{n+1} \eta^- - z_{n+1}$ expresses the volume of water inside the cell. In order to determine the individual value of ϕ_{n+1} and q_{n+1}^- , a corresponding water depth has to be calculated. In literature, tabulated values are used to map water volume to a certain water elevation ([Panday and Huyakorn, 2004](#)). In this work, the exact values of ϕ_{n+1} and $(\eta^- - z)_{n+1}$ are calculated from the water volume in an iterative way. Once $(\eta^- - z)_{n+1}$ is calculated, ϕ_{n+1}, q_x and q_y can be determined. Using an [iterative solution](#) significantly increases the computational cost. In the current model implementation, the evaluation of porosities, i.e. Eqs. [\(16\)](#), [\(17\)](#), turns out to be the most expensive part of the code, taking up to 15% of the total CPU time. It is important to note that this is not the one-off evaluation of porosity, but all evaluations summed up. The reason for the high cost is that, due to their dependency on water depth, the porosity values have to be evaluated several times for different water depths during one time step. Eq. [\(16\)](#) is solved at the beginning of the time step in each cell. During MUSCL reconstruction Eq. [\(17\)](#) is solved at each edge. Then, Eq. [\(16\)](#) is solved repeatedly during the iterative procedure to determine the new water depth and porosity in the next time step. For a two-stage Runge-Kutta method all these calculations have to be carried out twice in each time step.

A more efficient, approximate solution for this problem is presented in [Yu and Lane \(2006\)](#). However, in our opinion the calculation of the water depth should have very high accuracy, so the mass conservation is strictly satisfied.

The presented scheme is of explicit nature and therefore its stability is restricted by the Courant-Friedrichs-Lewy criterion (CFL), although the theoretical analyses of the stability constraint are very complicated for the present equations. The CFL criteria given in [Sanders et al. \(2008\)](#) is

$$(40) Cr = \psi \lambda \Delta r \Delta t \phi \Omega \leq 1$$

where $\lambda = |\text{unx} + \text{vny}| + \text{gh}$ is the largest wavespeed at the cell edge. Numerical experiments show that Eq. (40) degenerates the time step in cases with small porosity such that in the worst case the simulation comes to a halt.

In this work, the CFL number is heuristically calculated as

$$(41) Cr = |\text{v}| + \text{gh} \Delta t \Delta x$$

For the presented cases, $Cr < 0.3$ gives satisfactory results.

3.6. Boundary conditions

Boundary conditions are imposed on the boundary edge of the cell according to the theory of characteristics proposed in [Song et al. \(2011\)](#). State variables at the boundary edge can be computed using Riemann invariants. The porosities are mirrored from the cell inside the domain.

4. Computational examples

[Kim et al. \(2015\)](#) noted three types of errors of the porous shallow water model: (1) structural model errors, (2) scale errors and (3) [porosity](#) model errors. Errors of type 1 refer to the limitations of the mathematical model concept of the [shallow water equations](#) and are defined by the difference between measurement and high-resolution model (HR) results. Errors of type 2 are associated with the lack of sufficient grid resolution. In [Kim et al. \(2015\)](#) it is suggested to study the difference between HR model results and the HR model results which have been averaged over each porosity model grid cell (CR, standing for coarse-resolution). Errors of type 3 are the errors introduced by the porosity concept and are defined as the difference between the porosity model results (AP, standing for anisotropic porosity) and the CR model results.

Following the studies presented in [Kim et al. \(2015\)](#), the errors are computed using an L1-norm:

$$(42) L1 = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{j=1}^N |w_{1,j} - w_{2,j}|$$

Here, N is the number of points compared, w stands for a variable, e.g. h or q , $w_{1,j}$ and $w_{2,j}$ are results of two different models and j is the point index. The AP model is first calibrated by minimizing the L1-norm in a manual calibration process. In a second step the fine calibration is automated using the SciPy library ([Jones et al., 2001](#)). In the following examples, the errors of type 1, 2 and 3 as well as the differences between HR model and AP model, and AP model and measurement data are presented.

The classical shallow water model used for obtaining the reference results is the model presented in [Simons et al. \(2014\)](#). All simulations are run in parallel with 8 threads of an Intel® Core™ i7-2600 CPU (3.40 GHz).

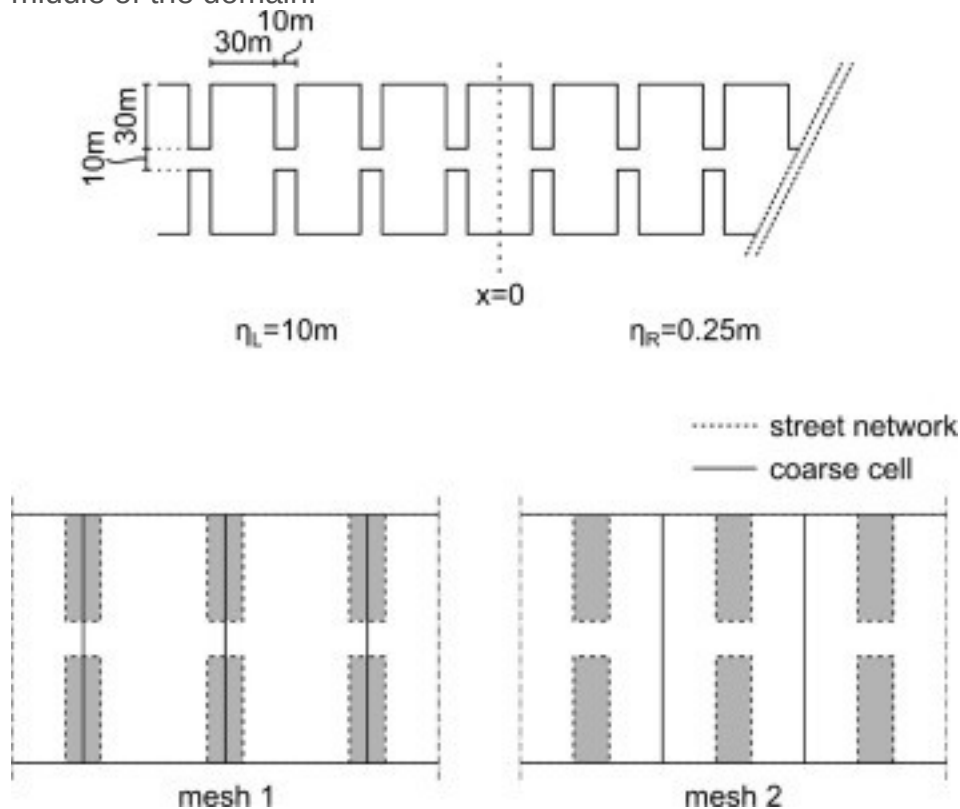
All triangular meshes are generated using the mesh generator Gmsh ([Geuzaine and Remacle, 2006](#)).

4.1. Idealized test case: dam-break flow through artificial street network

The first test case is a test case which is initially proposed in [Guinot \(2012\)](#). The HR model is used to generate the reference solution. The aim of this test case is to assess the sensitivity of the porosities ϕ and ψ to the mesh. Thus, different meshing strategies for the AP model are compared against each other. A second objective is to test the sensitivity of the model to the proposed drag coefficient $a \cdot cD_0$. For this purpose, the drag coefficient is varied and the results are compared.

4.1.1. Domain description, initial and boundary conditions

The computational domain is an infinitely long, frictionless street with periodical structures as shown in [Fig. 3](#). The initial water elevation on the left is $\eta_L=10\text{m}$ and on the right side $\eta_R=0.25\text{m}$. The discontinuity of water elevation located at $x=0$, which is the middle of the domain.



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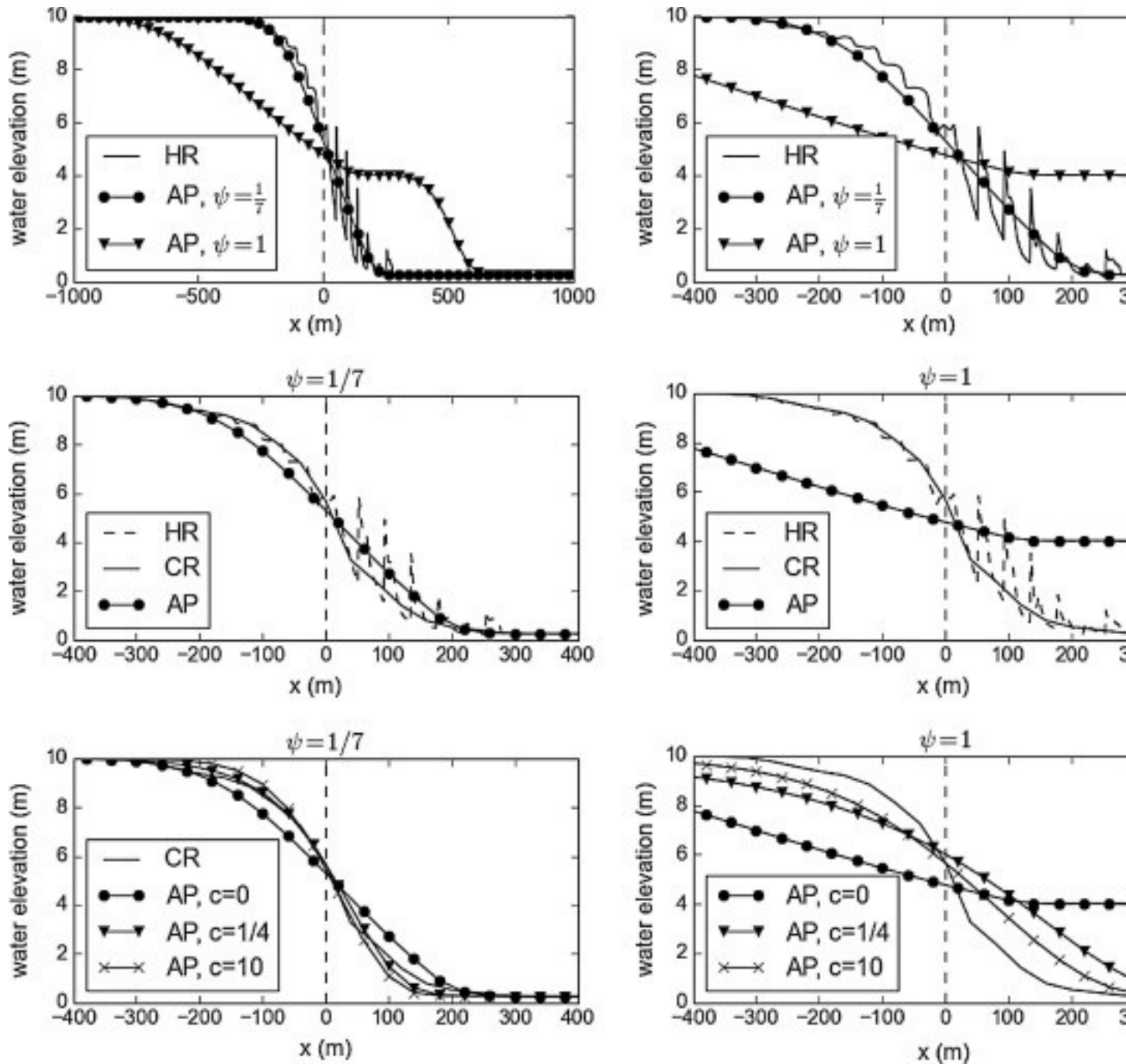
Fig. 3. Idealized test case: dam-break flow through periodic structures: top view on domain (not correctly scaled) ([Guinot, 2012](#)) (top), meshing strategies (bottom).

The HR model is two-dimensional and uses triangular cells with a characteristic length of 1m. The AP model is one-dimensional with a cell length of 40m.

4.1.2. Influence of different meshes and areal porosity

The AP model is expected to be sensitive to the mesh, because the areal porosity ψ depends on the position of the cell edge. Two configurations are investigated: (1) the cell edge is located at the narrow section of the street network (cf. [Fig. 3](#) (bottom left)), i.e. $\psi=1/7$, (2) the cell edge is located in the wider section of the street network (cf. [Fig. 3](#) (bottom right)), i.e. $\psi=1$. The volumetric porosity in both cases is the same and is calculated to be $\phi=11/14$. Thus, the difference in results can be directly related to the different areal porosities.

Comparison of model results at $t=50s$ are plotted in [Fig. 4](#) (top). The AP model with $\psi=1/7$ (mesh 1) produces the blockade effects of the structure better than the AP model with $\psi=1$ (mesh 2). Because both models do not resolve the street network explicitly, they can not reproduce the local fluctuations in the water elevation. In both models, the right-traveling [shock wave](#) as well as the left-traveling [rarefaction wave](#) are not captured accurately. If the edge is placed at the narrow section of the street network (mesh 1), introduces correct amount of resistance to the flow. In upstream direction, the water depth is slightly underpredicted. While the agreement is not perfect, the AP model results resemble the HR model solution. If the edge is placed at the wide section, the model is equivalent to the isotropic porosity shallow water model of [Guinot and Soares-Frazão, 2006](#), [Soares-Frazão et al., 2008](#). Here, the shock and rarefaction waves advance too quickly, and the AP model results are completely different from the HR model results.



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Fig. 4. Idealized test case: dam-break flow through periodic structures: results for $a-cD_0=0$ at $t=50s$ in the whole domain (top left), detail of the results for $x=[-400,400]$ (top right), CR model results for water depth compared with HR model results and AP model with $\psi=1/7$ (middle left), and AP model with $\psi=1$ (middle right), CR model results for water

depth compared with AP model results for different values of $c = a \cdot cD0$ at $t=50s$ for $\psi=1/7$ (bottom left), for $\psi=1$ (bottom right).

The CR model is compared with the AP model with $\psi=1/7$ in [Fig. 4](#) (middle left) and with the AP model with $\psi=1$ in [Fig. 4](#) (middle right). The CR model is more diffusive than the HR model. Local water depth fluctuations are averaged out. The AP model with $\psi=1/7$ shows better agreement with the CR model results than the AP model with $\psi=1$.

This shows that the AP model results are very sensitive to the areal porosity ψ and therefore are very sensitive to the mesh. Results indicate that the mesh should be constructed in such way that the cell edges are located on the blocking structures to capture their influence. If a structure is located completely inside a cell, its influence on the flow is only modeled by the volumetric porosity which can not model its obstruction to the flow sufficiently.

The right traveling shock wave in the AP model advances too slow. The reason for this might be that the local acceleration at narrow sections can not be taken into account by the AP model, which leads to an underestimation of the mass and momentum fluxes.

4.1.3. Influence of drag coefficient

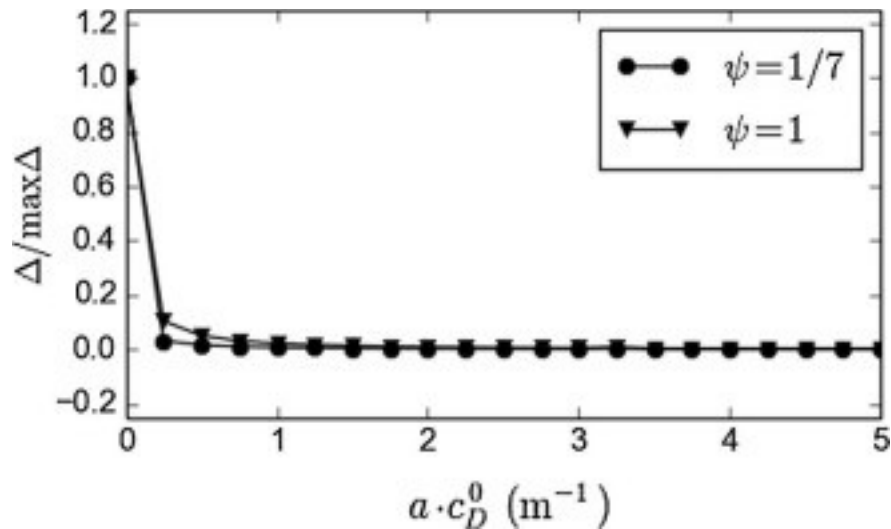
The value $a \cdot cD0$ is now varied to study its influence on the AP model. Beginning from $a \cdot cD0=0$, the value is increased with a step size of $0.25m^{-1}$ until $a \cdot cD0=10m^{-1}$. [Fig. 4](#)(bottom left) shows the AP model with $\psi=1/7$, while [Fig. 4](#) (bottom right) shows the AP model results with $\psi=1$. In both cases, increasing the drag coefficient improves the agreement until a critical value $a \cdot cD0 > 1$ is exceeded. After that, the drag coefficient does not change the result anymore. For the AP model with $\psi=1/7$, the value $a \cdot cD0=0.25$ gives the best agreement. For the AP model with $\psi=1$ the agreement improves for $a \cdot cD0 > 1$ but stays overall poor.

[Fig. 5](#) compares the sensitivity of both models to the drag coefficient. For this purpose, Δ is calculated as

$$(43) \Delta_i = L \cdot 1 \cdot AP((acD0)_i), AP((acD0)_{i+1})$$

where $(acD0)_0=0, (acD0)_1=0.25, (acD0)_2=0.5$, and so on, and $AP(x)$ is the result of the AP model for the drag coefficient x . For a meaningful comparison, [Fig. 5](#) shows a normalized value obtained by dividing each Δ_i by the maximum Δ_i , i.e.

$$(44) \Delta_{n,i} = \Delta_i / \max \Delta_i$$



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Fig. 5. Idealized test case: dam-break flow through periodic structures: sensitivity of the AP model results for different values of $a \cdot c_D^0$ at $t=50s$ With $\Delta_i=L1[AP(acD0)_i-AP(acD0)_{i+1}]$.

[Fig. 5](#) shows, that the AP model with $\psi=1/7$ is less sensitive to the drag coefficient than the AP model with $\psi=1$. This implies that the areal porosity effect dominates the flow such that the influence of the drag force on the momentum is less significant. For values $acD0>1$, the influence of the increasing drag coefficient is negligible. This is because the numerical scheme limits the drag force source term in such way that the flow direction is not reversed.

If the areal porosities are large, the numerical flux is not limited as strictly and blocking effects of the obstructions are not reproduced as well as for smaller areal porosities. In this case, increasing the drag coefficient has larger influence on model results. The drag force depends only on the volumetric porosity, which is the same for both cases.

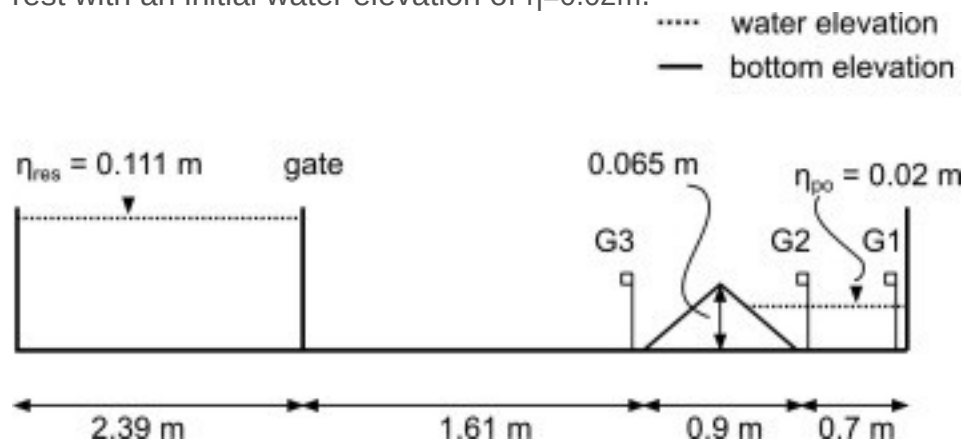
Increasing the drag coefficient has a similar effect as increasing the [friction coefficient](#) and the results are similar to the findings by [Liang et al. \(2007\)](#) who capture the effect of buildings to some extent using an increased [roughness](#) coefficient. If the areal porosities are small, the flow is blocked more severely at the edges and the flow velocity is not as high as in the unobstructed flow. Therefore, changing the value of $a \cdot c_D^0$ does not effect the results as much.

4.2. Dam-break flow over a triangular bottom sill

Herein, the depth-dependent porosity is demonstrated by replicating a [laboratory experiment](#) conducted at the Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium ([Soares-Frazão, 2007](#)).

4.2.1. Domain description, initial and boundary conditions

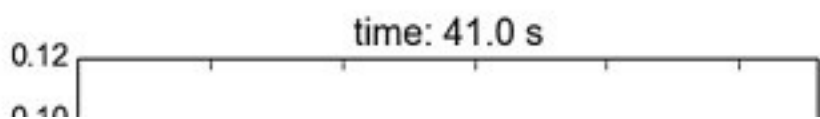
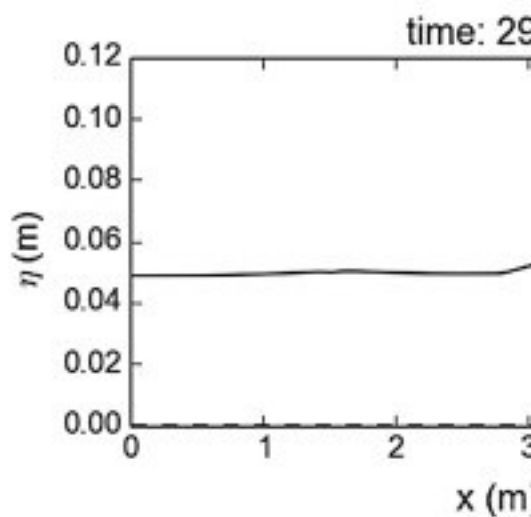
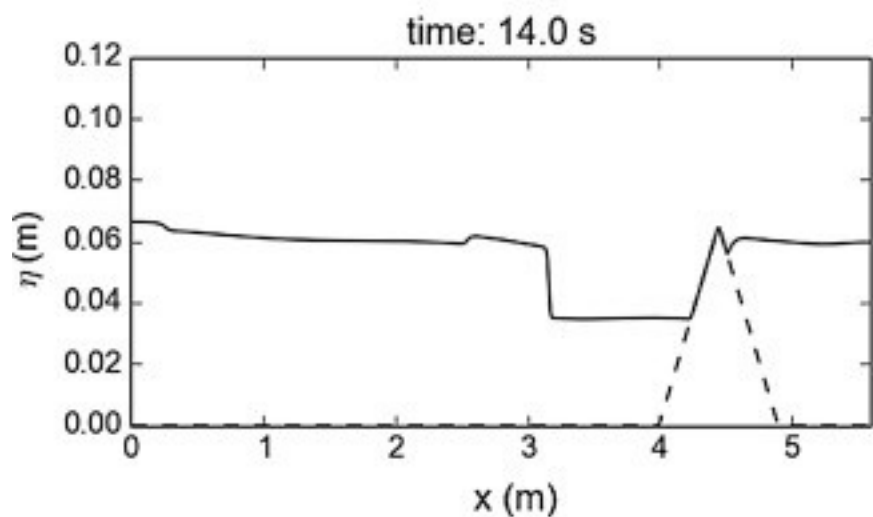
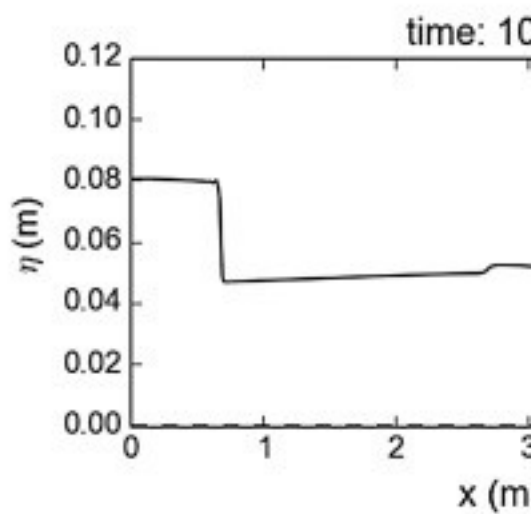
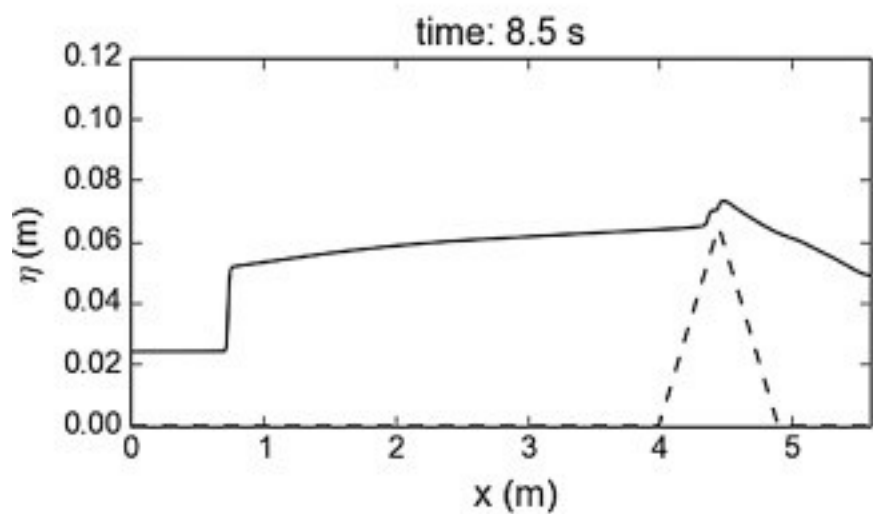
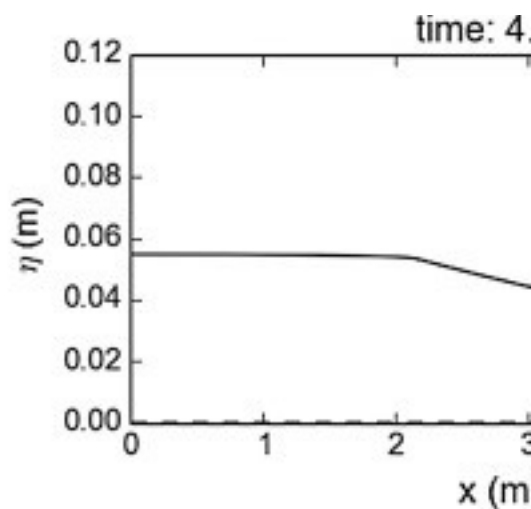
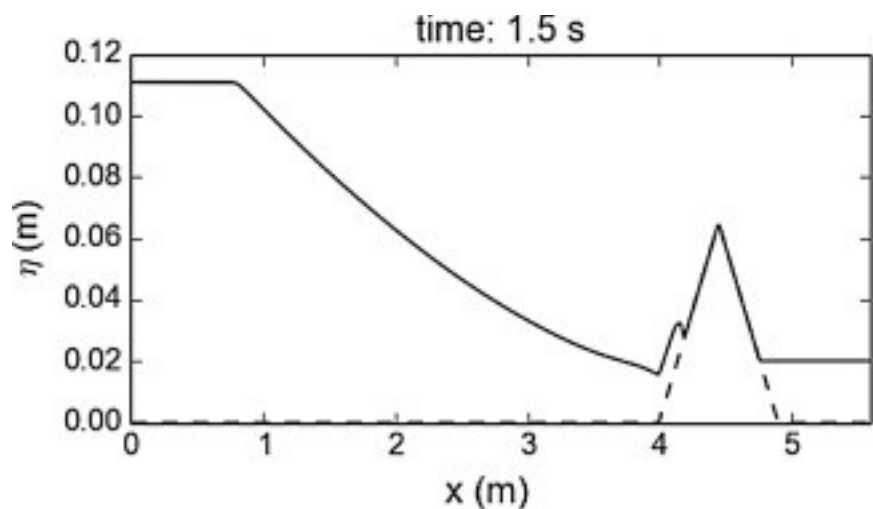
The experiment was carried out in a 5.6m long and 0.5m width [channel](#). The peak of the triangular bottom sill is located at $x=4.45\text{m}$ and is 0.065m high. The sill is symmetrical and has a base length of 0.9m . The initial conditions and the geometry is given in [Fig. 6](#). An initial water elevation of $\eta_{\text{res}}=0.111\text{m}$ is ponding in the reservoir before the gate is opened. The gate is located at $x=2.39\text{m}$. On the downstream side of the sill, water is at rest with an initial water elevation of $\eta=0.02\text{m}$.



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Fig. 6. Dam-break over triangular bottom sill: side view on domain (not correctly scaled) ([Soares-Frazão, 2007](#)).

The HR model uses square shaped cells with a side length of 0.01m . It is noted that this test case is essentially one-dimensional. However, the domain was discretized in two dimensions, resulting in a mesh with 28,000 cells. The AP model uses square shaped cells with side length of 0.4m , which gives a mesh with 56 cells. The bottom of the AP model is completely flat and the sill is accounted for only by the porosity terms. [Fig. 7](#) (bottom right) shows a sideview of the AP model mesh with the HR model bed elevation plotted for reference.



1. [Download high-res image \(534KB\)](#)
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Fig. 7. Dam-break over triangular bottom sill: snapshots at different time steps of HR model results for water elevation and AP model mesh plotted over HR model bed elevation (bottom right).

Measured water depth over time is available at 3 measurement gauges, located at $x=5.575\text{m}$ (G1), $x=4.925\text{m}$ (G2) and $x=3.935\text{m}$ (G3). The locations of the gauges are given in [Fig. 6](#).

The roughness of the channel is quantified in [Soares-Frazão \(2007\)](#) with a Manning's coefficient of $n=0.011\text{s m}^{-1/3}$. This value is used both in the HR and the AP model.

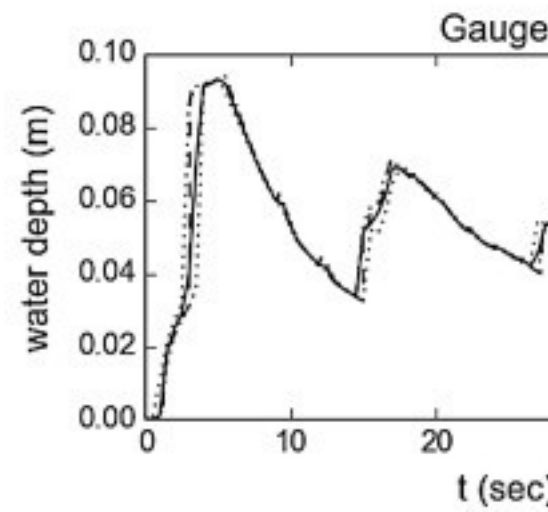
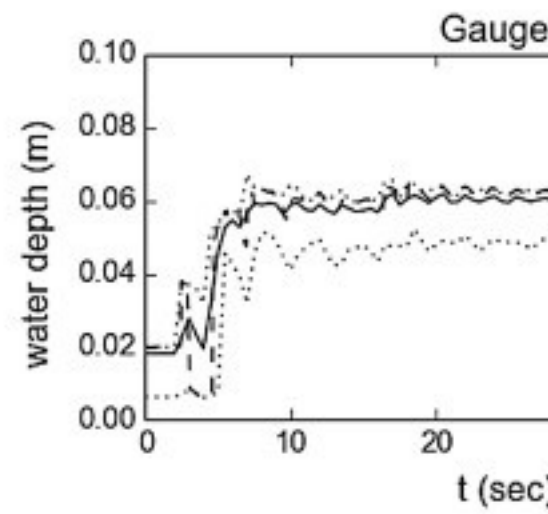
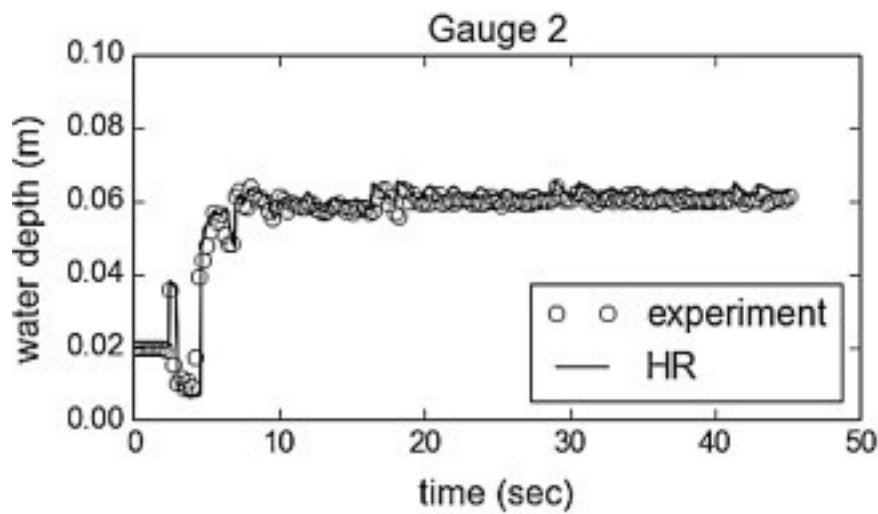
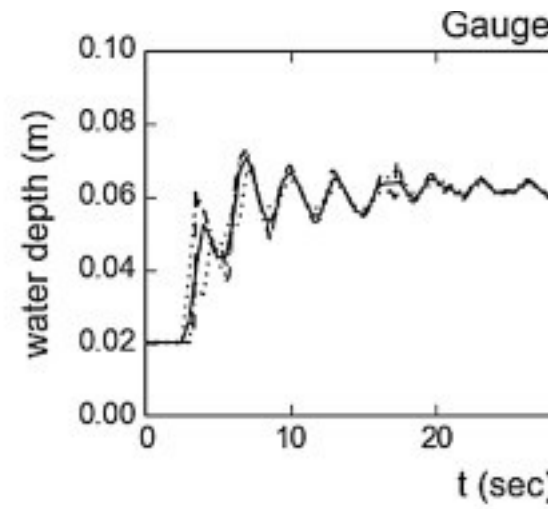
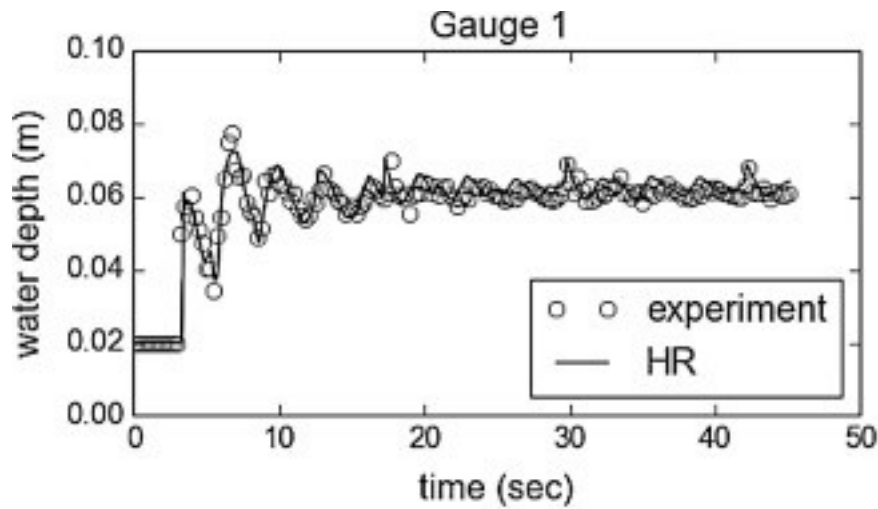
4.2.2. Model calibration and run time

The AP model is calibrated by changing the value $a \cdot cD_0$ in Eq. (35). Calibration is carried out manually using the CR model as reference. Good agreement has been achieved with $a \cdot cD_0=5\text{m}^{-1}$. The HR model takes about 4000s to finish, while the AP model takes only 3.5s. This corresponds to a speedup of about 1140.

4.2.3. Error analysis

4.2.3.1. Structural model errors

This test case features an obstruction that is unsubmerged at the beginning of the simulation, completely submerged by the dam-break wave in the middle of the simulation, partially submerged towards the end of the simulation. In [Fig. 7](#), snapshots of the HR model results at various times are shown. The HR model shows excellent agreement with the experimental results, as seen in [Fig. 8](#) (left), especially at gauge 2 and gauge 3. The larger discrepancy at gauge 1 might be explained by the splashing of water in the experiment which can not be reproduced by the shallow water equations.



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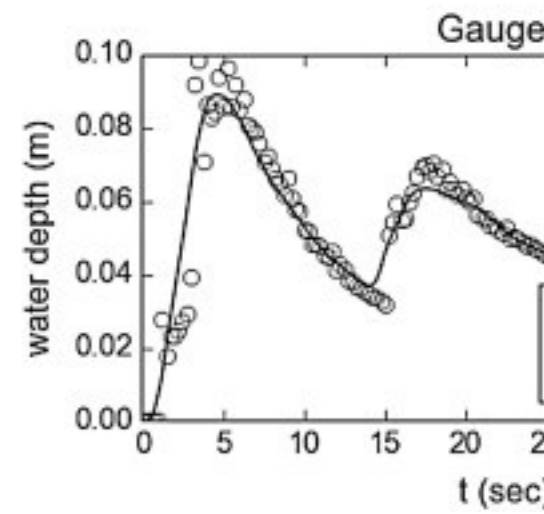
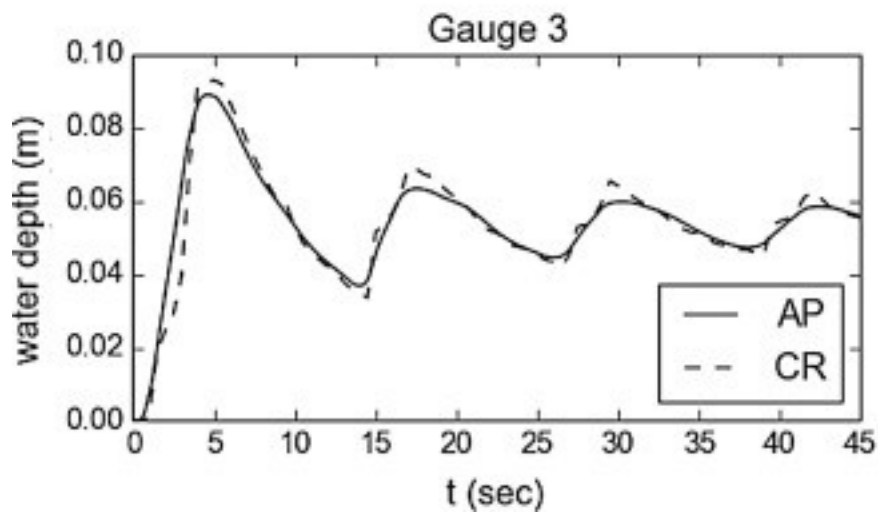
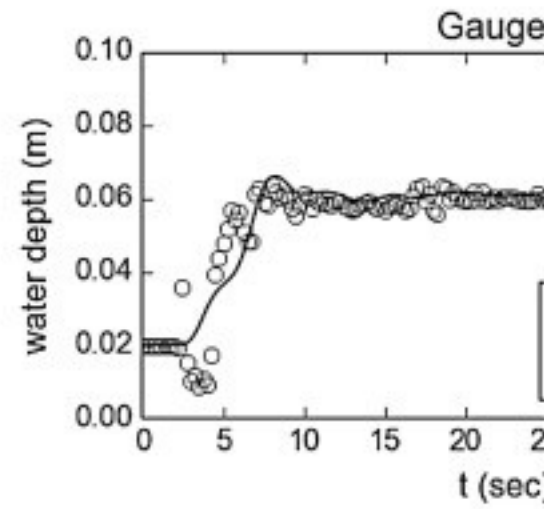
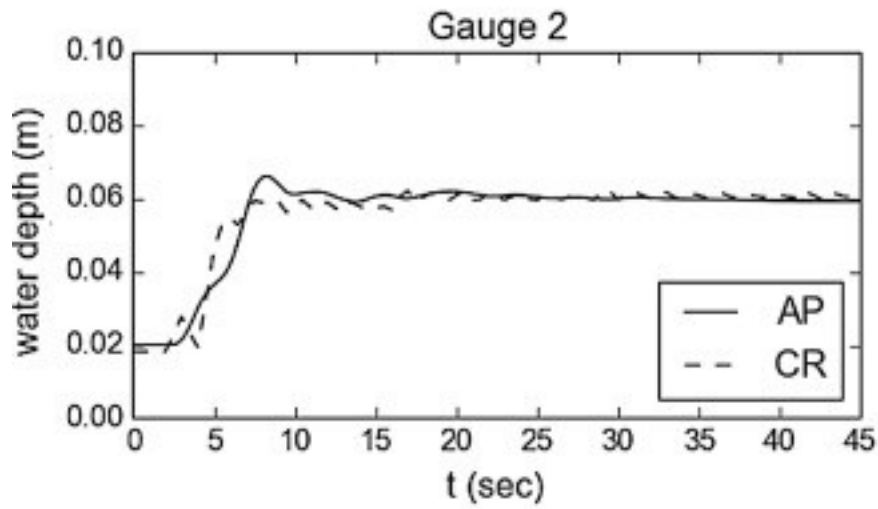
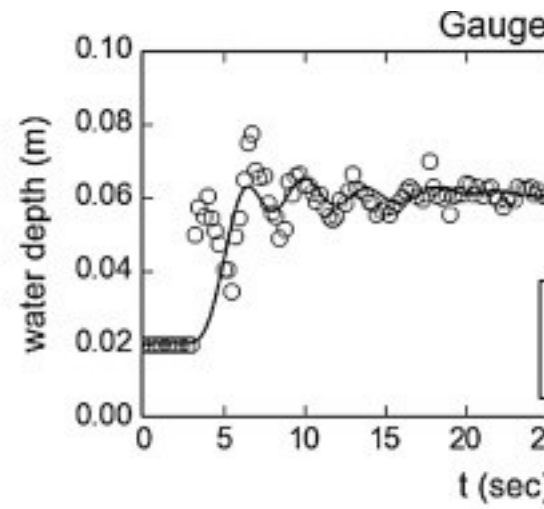
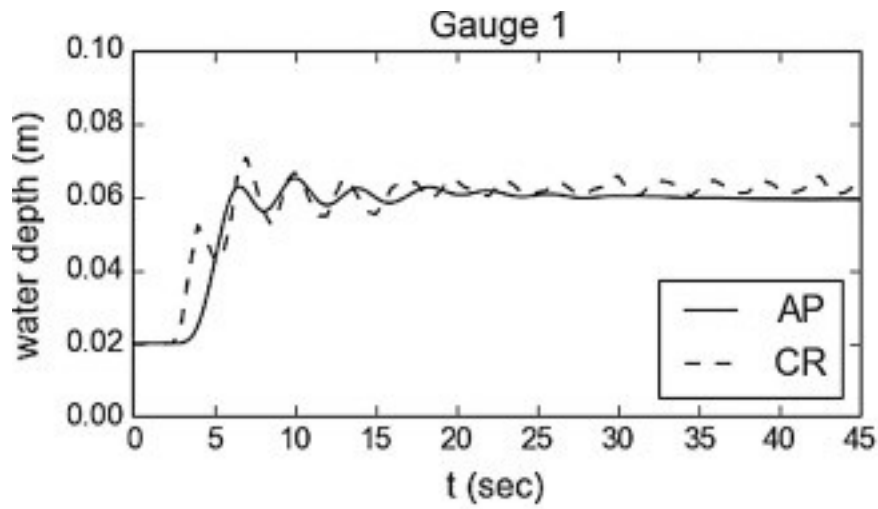
Fig. 8. Dam-break over triangular bottom sill: HR model results for water depth compared with experimental data ([Soares-Frazão, 2007](#)) (left), CR model results for water depth compared with HR model results, dotted lines denote the minimum and maximum values inside the coarse cell (right).

4.2.3.2. Scale errors

Scale errors are calculated by mapping the HR model results to a coarser grid, which in this study is the grid of the AP model. The value at a low [resolution cell](#) is determined by [arithmetic](#) averaging the values over all the high-resolution cells lying inside the low resolution cell. The CR model results show very good agreement with the HR model results, as seen in [Fig. 8](#) (right), where the comparison at the three gauges is shown. The dotted lines show the maximum and minimum water depths sampled inside the coarse grid. It can be seen that at gauge 1 and gauge 3, the difference between the minimum and the maximum water depth is low. At gauge 2, which is located just behind the sill, the deviation is high. Owing to the [reflected waves](#), the flow at gauge 2 is more complex than at the other gauges. Consequently, here the agreement between CR model and HR model is not as close as at the other gauges. It is observed that the CR model introduces some diffusion to the results and the curves are smoother than the HR model results.

4.2.3.3. Porosity model errors

The porosity model errors are assessed by comparing AP model results to CR model results, as shown in [Fig. 9](#) (left). The AP model shows good agreement with the CR model at all gauges. At gauge 1, which is located furthest away from the gate the predicted wave arrives a bit late. However, after 5s the arrival time of the second peak is captured despite the slightly undershot peak water level. The third peak is captured accurately. After that, the AP model does not predict as much fluctuation as the CR model but the average water elevation does not differ much. The agreement at gauge 2 and gauge 3 is much better. Especially at gauge 3 all waves are captured with good agreement. At gauge 2, the rise of the curve starts correctly but the AP model overshoots the CR model at about 8s. A comparison between AP model result with experimental data is shown in [Fig. 9](#) (right). The AP model reproduces the experimental data well.



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Fig. 9. Dam-break over triangular bottom sill: AP model results for water depth compared with CR model results (left), AP model results for water depth compared with experimental data ([Soares-Frazão, 2007](#)) (right).

4.2.3.4. Summary

The L1-errors are listed in [Table 1](#), [Table 2](#). In both tables, the errors are calculated as the arithmetic mean of the errors at the 3 gauges. [Table 1](#) shows a summary of the cell sizes and L1-errors for HR model, CR model and AP model. Here, the errors are calculated using the experimental data as a reference. Overall, the errors are two orders of magnitude smaller than the initial water elevation in the reservoir ($\eta_{res}=0.111m$).

The L1-errors for structural, scale and porosity model errors are summarized in [Table 2](#). All errors are in the same order of magnitude, which is one order of magnitude smaller than the maximum measured water depth. The porosity model (E3) error is the largest, followed by the structural model error (E1). The scale error (E2) is the smallest error. It is concluded that in this example, the error introduced by the coarse grid is the smallest. The mathematical model limitation of the shallow water equations introduces larger errors than the grid coarsening, but the largest error is introduced by not resolving the sill explicitly.

Table 1. Dam-break over triangular bottom sill: summary of shallow water [model formulations](#) and corresponding meshes (HR: High-resolution, CR: averaged HR model, AP: anisotropic porosity); L1-norm is calculated with regard to the experimental results.

Model	Mesh type	Cell size (m)	Cell nr.	Time (s)	L1 (m)
HR	Square	0.01	28000	4000	0.0024
CR	Square	0.01	28000	4000	0.0031
AP	Square	0.4	56	3.5	0.0035

Table 2. Dam-break over triangular sill: model error (E1), scale error (E2) and [porosity](#) error (E3).

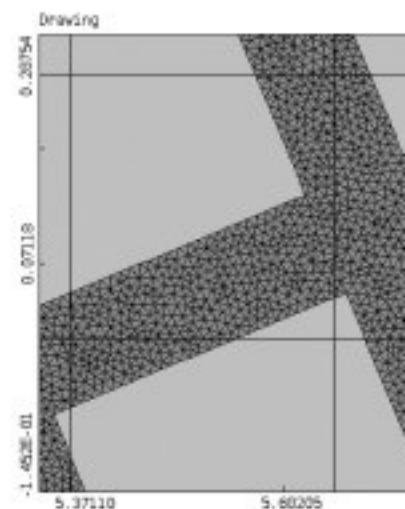
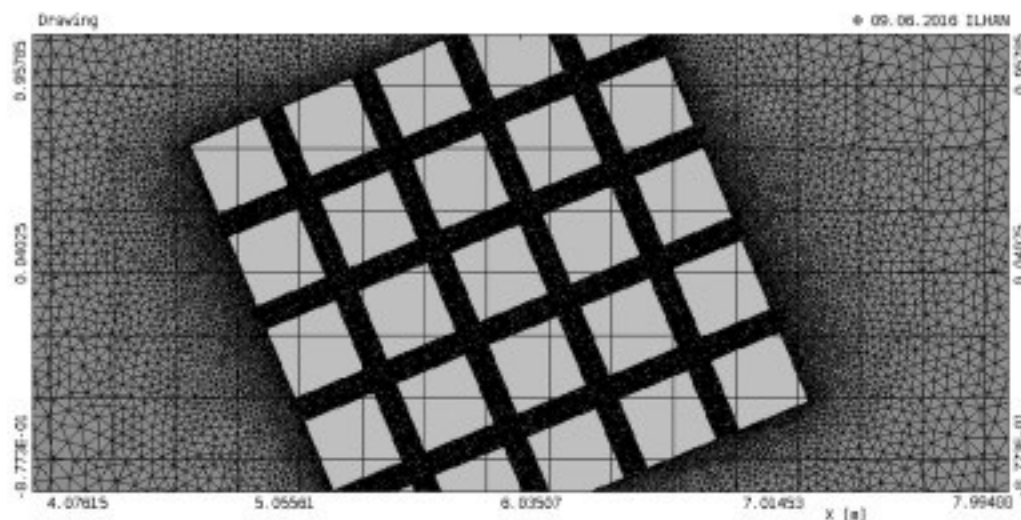
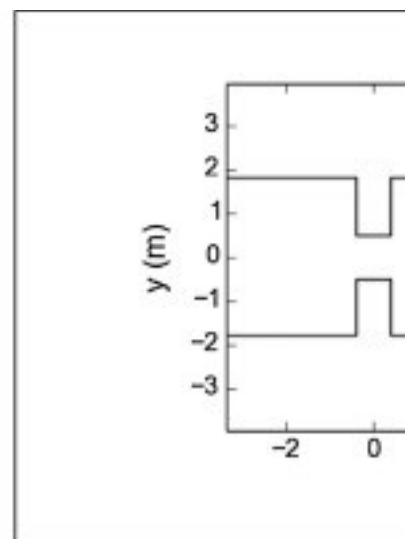
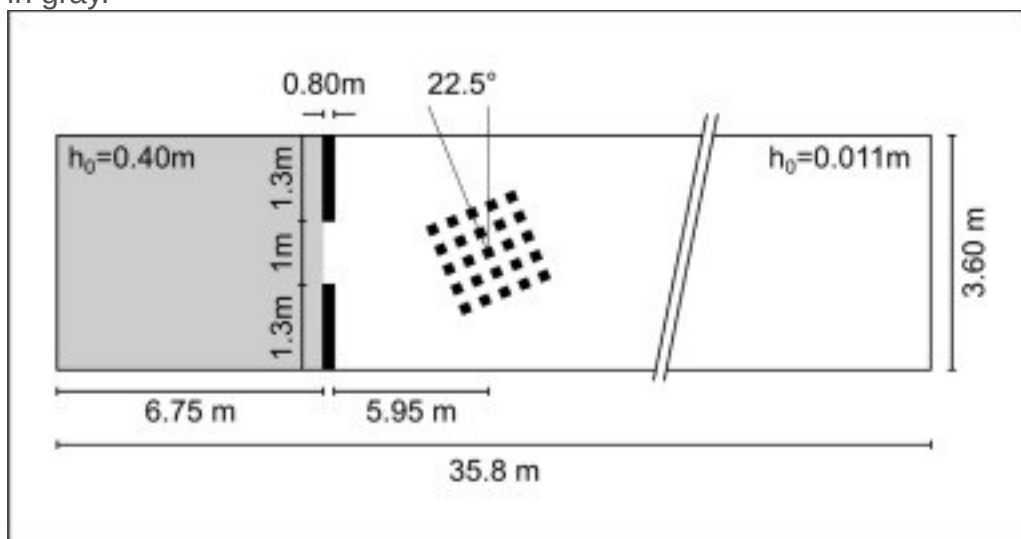
Type	L1 (m)
E1	0.0024
E2	0.0016
E3	0.0038

4.3. Dam-break flow through an idealized city

In this computational example, results of a dam-break experiment conducted at the Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium ([Soares-Frazão and Zech, 2008](#)) are numerically reproduced.

4.3.1. Domain description, initial and boundary conditions

The domain is a 35.8m long and 3.6m wide channel with horizontal bed. The idealized city consists of 5×5 buildings, each of them being a square block with a side length of 0.30m. The distance between the blocks is 0.10m. The center of the building block is placed 5.95m away from the gate and rotated 22.5° in counter-clockwise direction around its center. The dam-break is constructed by opening a 1m gate, which initially separates the reservoir, where water is ponding at 0.40m, from the rest of the channel, where a very thin layer of 0.011m water is reported. For further details on the experimental setup and employed measurement techniques, the reader is referred to [Soares-Frazão and Zech \(2008\)](#). The domain is illustrated in [Fig. 10](#) (top left), where the reservoir is colored in gray.



1. [Download high-res image \(1003KB\)](#)
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Fig. 10. Dam-break through idealized city: top view on domain (not correctly scaled) ([Soares-Frazão and Zech, 2008](#)) (top left), position of all 87 gauges (black), results are plotted for 8 gauges (indicated by their numbers), the boundary of the building block is plotted for reference (top right), comparison of HR model mesh (triangular) and CR and AP model mesh (square), meshing of the building block (bottom left), mesh detail between houses (bottom right).

The computational domain only includes the reservoir and the first 16m of the channel. For the duration of the simulations, $t=15.5s$, the shock wave does not travel further than this length. The downstream boundary is an open boundary and all other boundaries are closed boundaries.

The HR model uses a triangular mesh with variable cell sizes: the reservoir is discretized with cells with a characteristic length of $l_{c,1}=0.3m$. The area inside the channel which is sufficiently far away from the building blocks is discretized with a characteristic length of $l_{c,2}=0.1m$. The space between the buildings is discretized with a characteristic length of $l_{c,3}=0.01m$. The buildings are represented as holes in the mesh, which is a method commonly used in urban flood modeling ([Schubert et al., 2008](#)). Hence, the gap between two buildings is discretized with about 10 cells and the total cell number is 96339. The AP model uses square-shaped cells with side length 0.25m, whereby the volumetric porosity is calculated using 125 subgrid cells, resulting in a mesh with 1272 cells. The HR mesh is compared to the AP model mesh in [Fig. 10](#) (bottom). Both meshes in the region of the building block is shown in [Fig. 10](#) (bottom left), while in [Fig. 10](#) (bottom right) a close-up view is shown. A building is in general contained in 4 AP model cells. The buildings do not align with the cell edges. As discussed in Section [4.1](#), the blocking effect of buildings is not captured accurately if the building is positioned inside the cell instead of at the edge, but this is inevitable for some front-row houses (cf. [Fig. 10](#) (bottom)).

Experimental data are available at 87 measurement gauges distributed inside the channel ([Soares-Frazão and Zech, 2008](#)). The positions of these gauges are given in [Fig. 10](#) (top right). In the discussion, results are plotted for 8 gauges, namely gauges 3, 13, 25, 35, 40, 59, 67 and 85.

The roughness of the channel has been estimated in [Soares-Frazão and Zech \(2008\)](#) with a Manning's coefficient of $n=0.01sm^{1/3}$. This value is used for both the HR and the AP model.

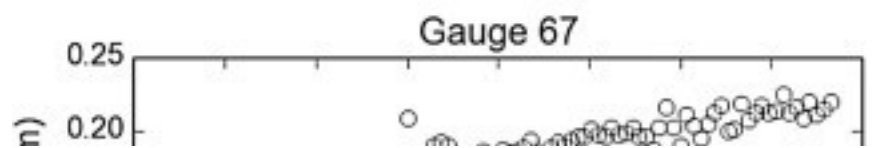
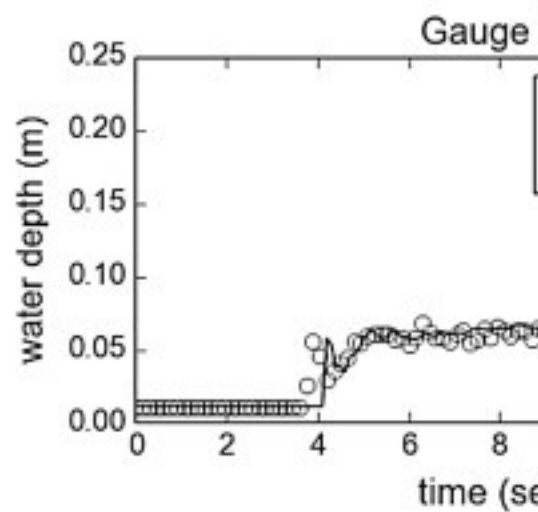
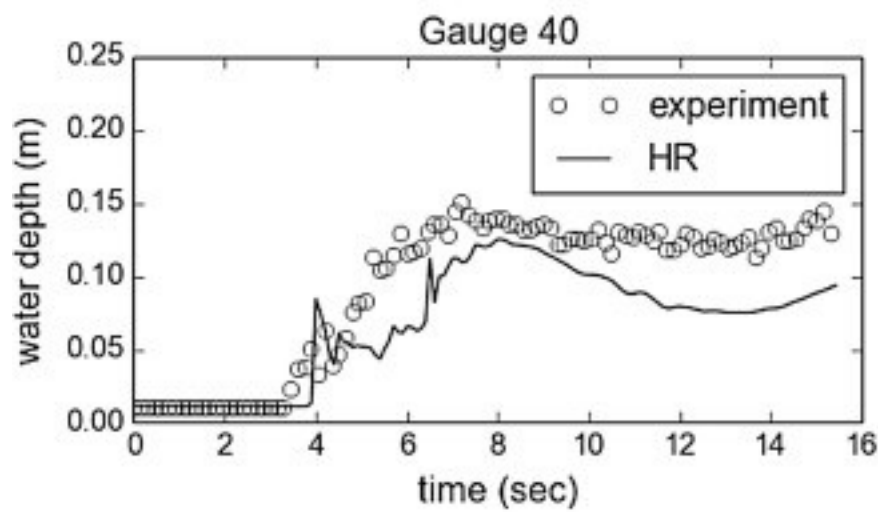
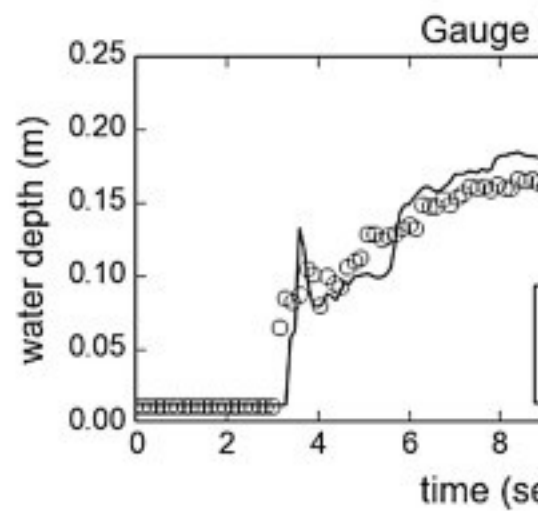
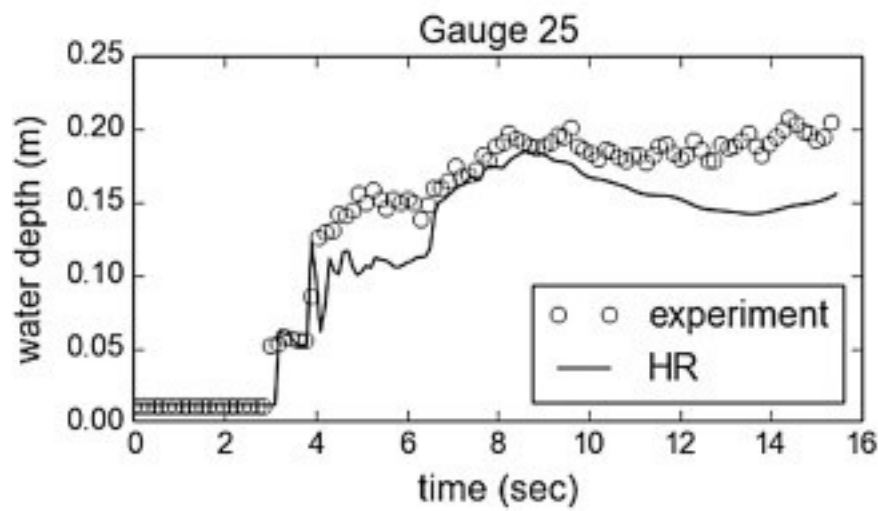
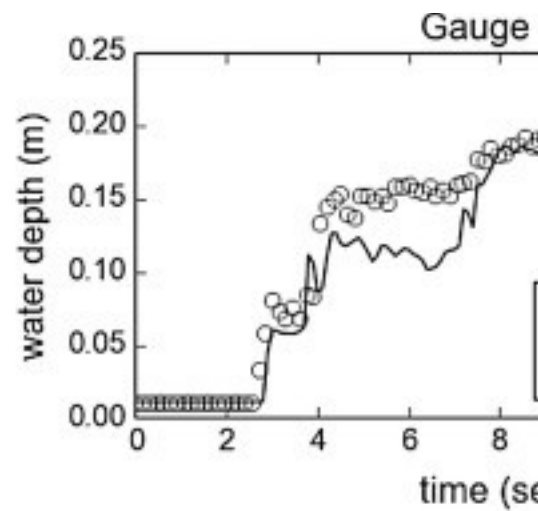
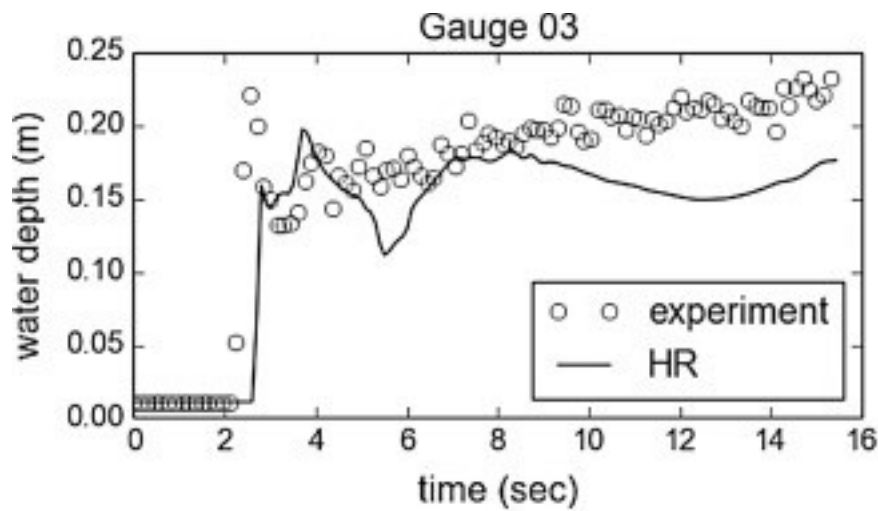
4.3.2. Model calibration and run time

The AP model is calibrated with the value $a \cdot cD_0$ in the drag law, given in Eq. (35). Calibration is carried out with regard to the CR model results using Brent's algorithm for minimization (Brent, 1973). Brent's search returns $a \cdot cD_0 = 1.9 \text{ m}^{-1}$ with a corresponding L1-error of 0.025m. The HR model simulation takes about 3000s to finish. The AP model requires about 4s. Consequently, the speedup is calculated as 750.

4.3.3. Error analysis

4.3.3.1. Structural model errors

The HR model makes overall an acceptable prediction of the water depth at the evaluated gauges. In Fig. 11, the water depth calculated by the HR model at the aforementioned gauges is plotted together with the measured water depth. The arrival time of the wave is predicted correctly at all gauges, although the HR model predicts a slightly later arrival. Larger deviations between the results occur at the later stages of the simulation, where the HR model results undershoot the experimental data. For this test case, Soares-Frazão and Zech (2008) report lower computed water depths as well. The deviations might partly be caused by the frictionless wall-boundaries imposed at the buildings and the wave reflections that can not be modeled by the shallow water equations. The model overestimates the flow velocities, leading to overall lower water depths. As time passes, this effect becomes more significant. Gauge 67 is located in front of the houses. Overall, the characteristics of the experimental data set are captured by the HR model, i.e. the small peak at around $t=2\text{s}$ and the rise at around $t=4\text{s}$, however the first peak is delayed and the second rise at $t=4\text{s}$ is too early. In general, the HR model appears to overpredict the steepness of the water level variations. This is especially distinct at the sharp rise of the HR model curve at $t=4\text{s}$ in comparison to the smoother rise of the experimental curve. As in Soares-Frazão and Zech (2008), this indicates that the entrance contraction can not be reproduced by the mathematical model. This is also indicated by the discrepancies at gauge 3, which is located at the entrance of the building block. The rise of the water level is again delayed. The drop in water depth at around $t=6\text{s}$ is not observed in the experiment. Gauge 13, located slightly behind gauge 3, shows good agreement. Here, the front of the wave is captured accurately in time. The agreement at gauges 25, 35 and 59, which are all located between the buildings, is very well.



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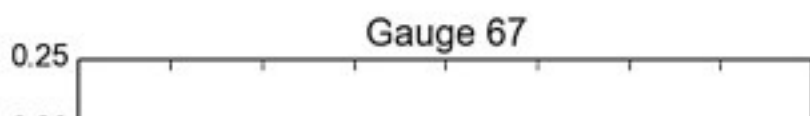
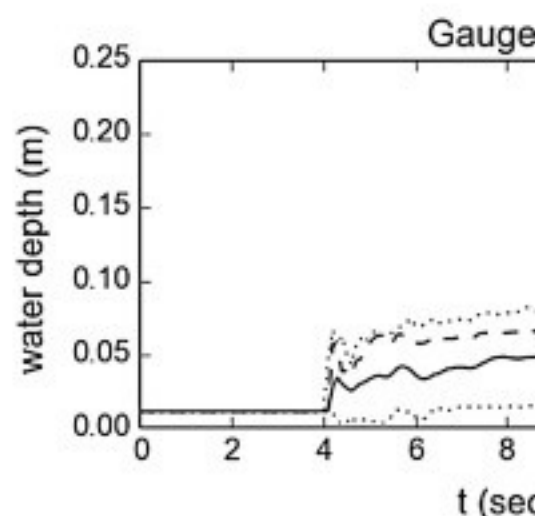
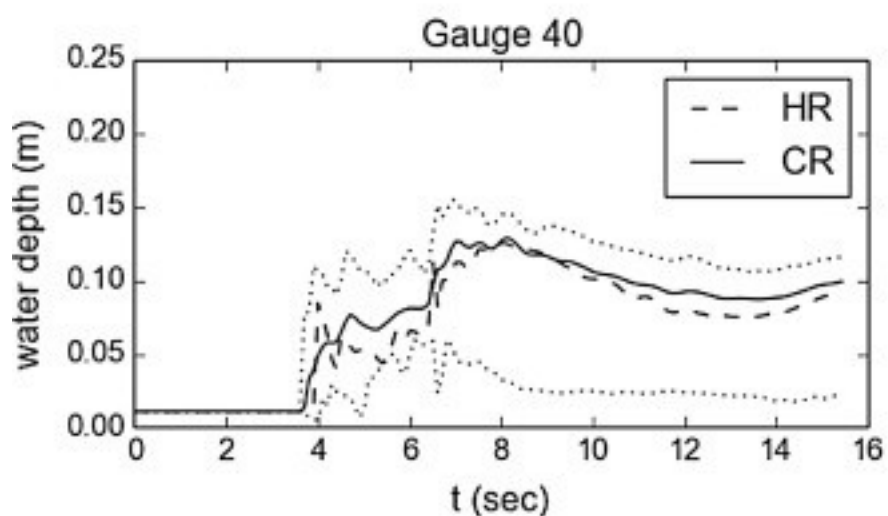
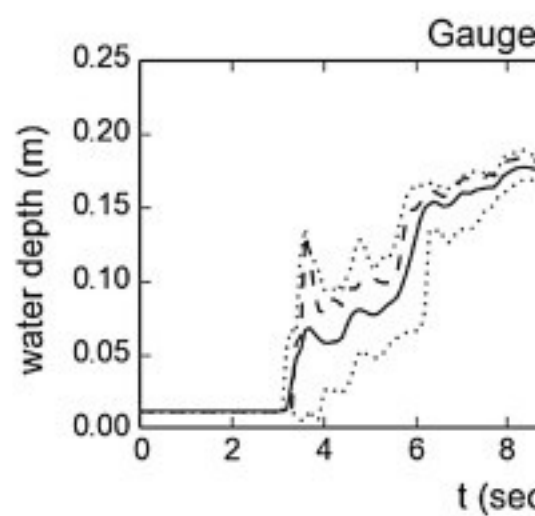
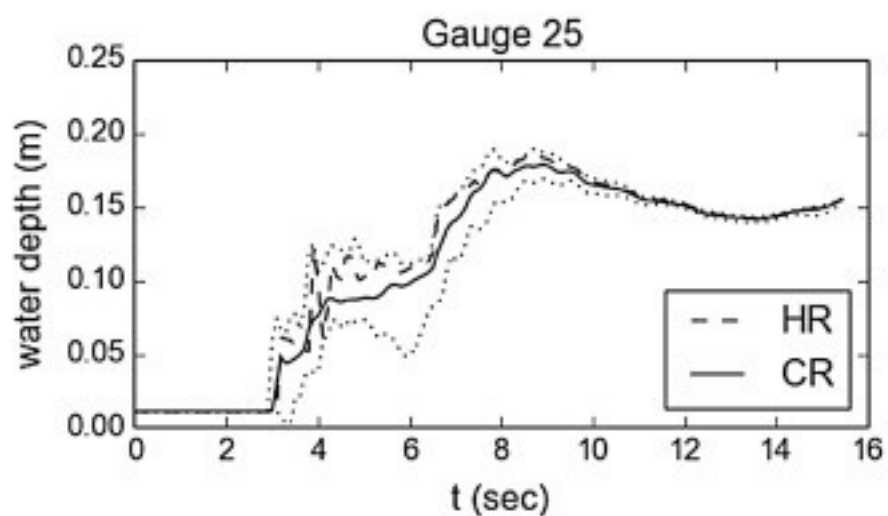
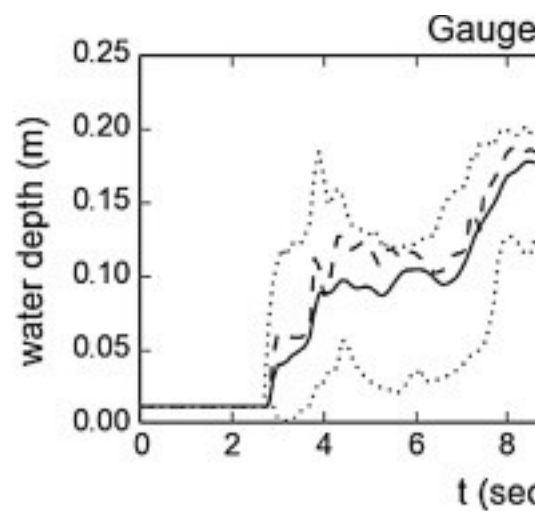
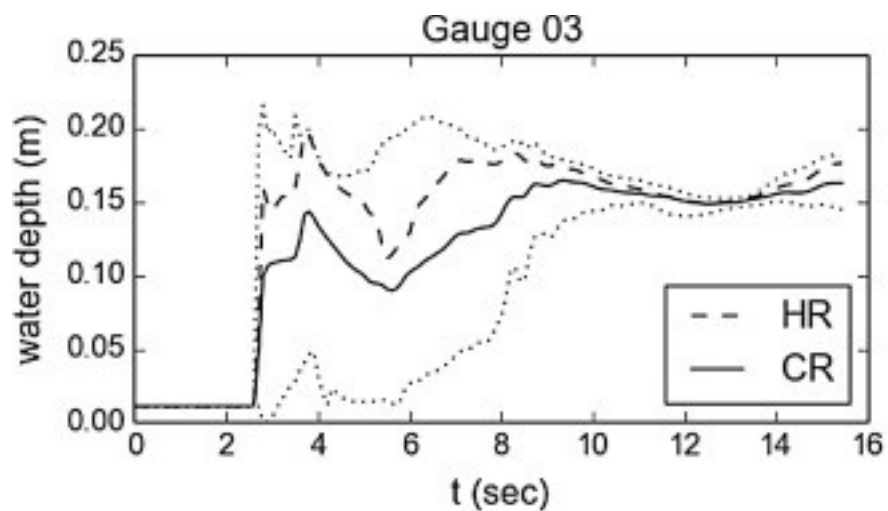
Fig. 11. Dam-break through idealized city: HR model results for water depth compared with experimental data of [Soares-Frazão and Zech \(2008\)](#).

Gauge 40, which is also located between the buildings, shows worse agreement than the aforementioned gauges. As at gauge 3, the general shape of the experimental data is reproduced. Finally, at gauge 85, which is outside of the building block, good agreement is achieved.

Overall, this is a challenging test case for the mathematical model. The angled position of the buildings that are not aligned with the flow direction coupled with the hydraulic jump at the entrance of the building block increases the difficulty. In addition, wave reflections and turbulent [eddies](#) are not accounted for in the model. Consequently, the structural model error is relatively high.

4.3.3.2. Scale errors

In [Fig. 12](#), the averaged water depth is plotted against the HR model water depth at the four gauges. The measured water depth is omitted to avoid cluttering the figure. Maximum and minimum values of the high-resolution cells lying inside the low-resolution cell are plotted as well. Overall, the averaging process smooths out the HR model results. Local fluctuations are not captured by the CR model. It is noted that a large difference between the minimum and the maximum in a coarse cell indicates complex flows. As expected, the location of the gauge can be related to the complexity of the flow. Gauges 67 and 85 are located outside of the building block and the minimum and maximum of the values at these gauges do not differ much. Conversely for the other gauges located between the buildings, the local fluctuation is high. In general, the difference between the minimum and maximum gives a good indication for the difference between HR and CR model. If the flow in a coarse cell is complex, there exist high differences between minimum and maximum water levels inside the cell. This complex flow can not be resolved on the scale of the CR model, thus it introduces an error due to scale to the CR model result. Consequently, the difference between HR and CR model is high at, e.g. Gauge 3, positioned at the front of the building block where the flow is complex, and at Gauge 40, located at a crossroad. In contrast, if the flow inside a coarse cell is relatively smooth, the loss of information due to low resolution is not that severe. This is seen, e.g. at Gauge 85, located outside of the building block.

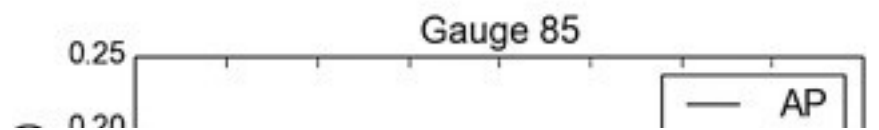
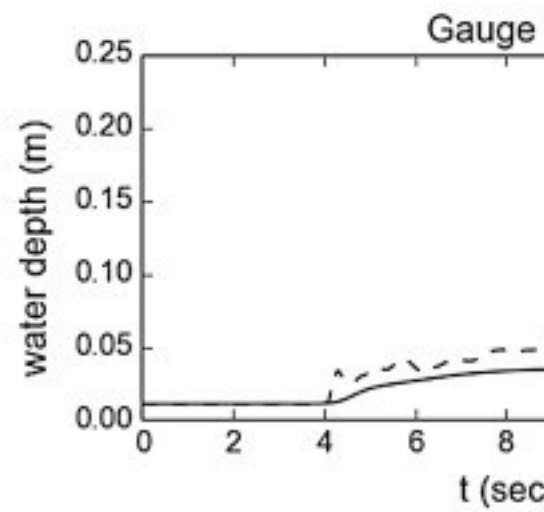
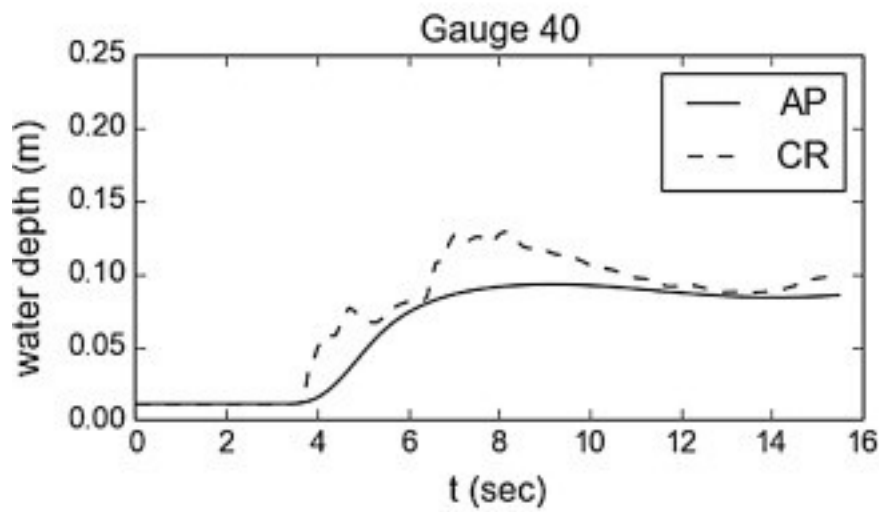
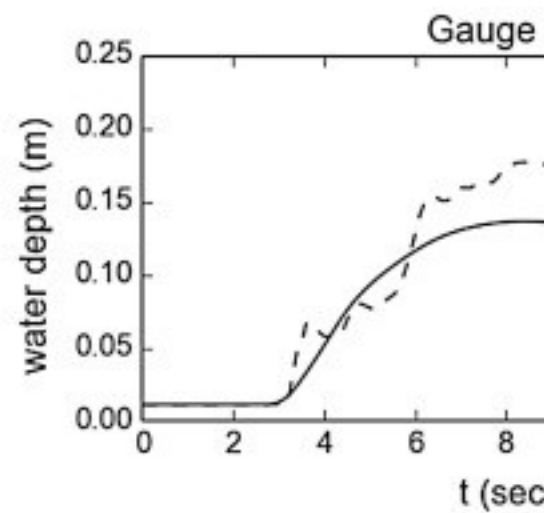
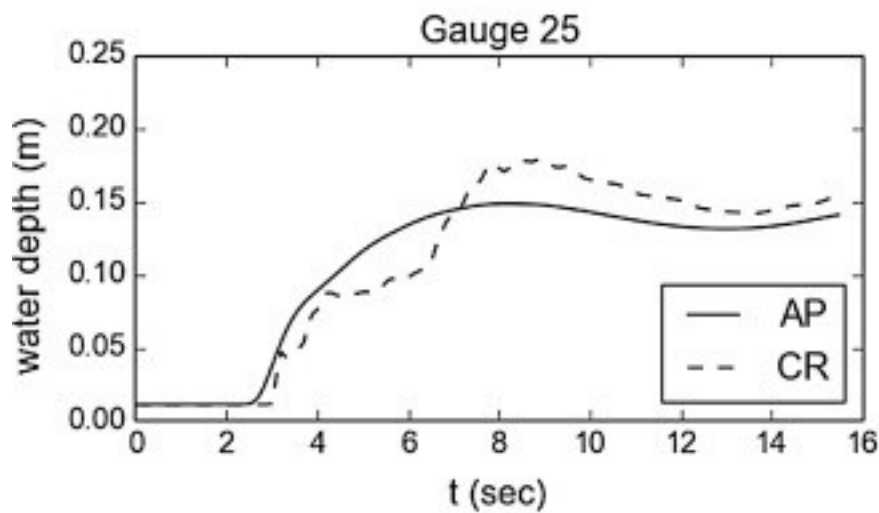
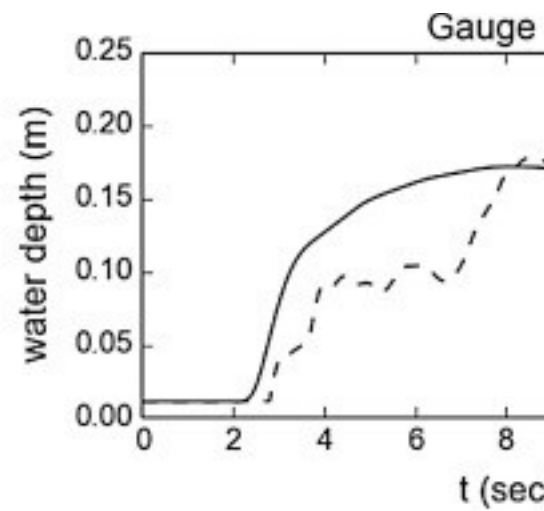
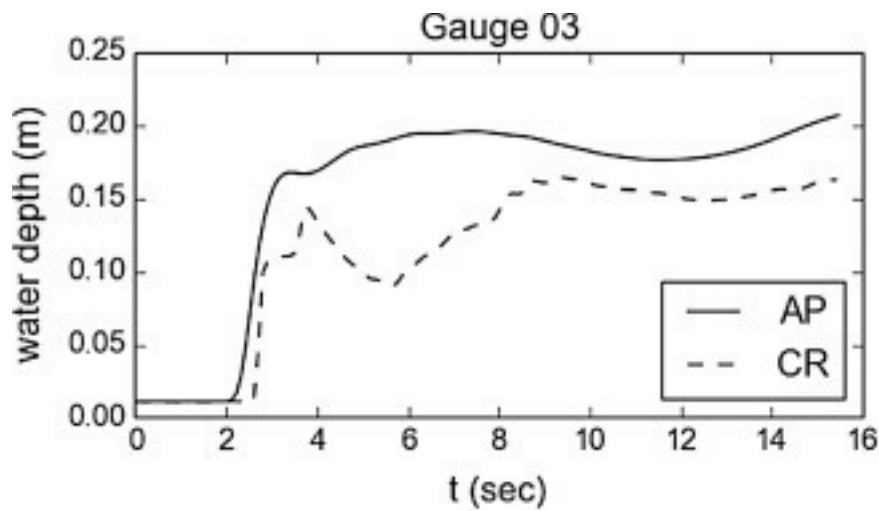


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Fig. 12. Dam-break through idealized city: CR model results for water depth compared with HR model results, dotted lines denote the minimum and maximum values inside the coarse cell.

4.3.3.3. Porosity model errors

The AP model shows acceptable agreement with the CR model, although some gauges observe less good agreement, e.g. gauge 85 the agreement is poor. In general, the results of the AP model are smoother and more “smeared” than the CR model results. In [Fig. 13](#), AP and CR model results are plotted for eight gauges. The AP model water depth at gauge 3 shows similarities to the maximum value at this gauge. Gauges 13, 25 and 67 show good agreement. At gauge 35, the shape of the curve is reproduced but the AP model underestimates the water depth. Gauge 85, which is located behind the building block, shows the worst agreement among the eight presented gauges. The AP model is unable to reproduce the CR model result, with underestimated peak water level and delayed arrival time. Overall, the general properties of the AP model results, i.e. the lack of local and spatial fluctuations, are consistent with the findings in [Kim et al. \(2015\)](#).



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Fig. 13. Dam-break through idealized city: AP model results for water depth compared with CR model results.

4.3.3.4. Summary

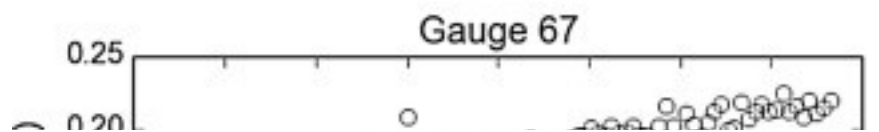
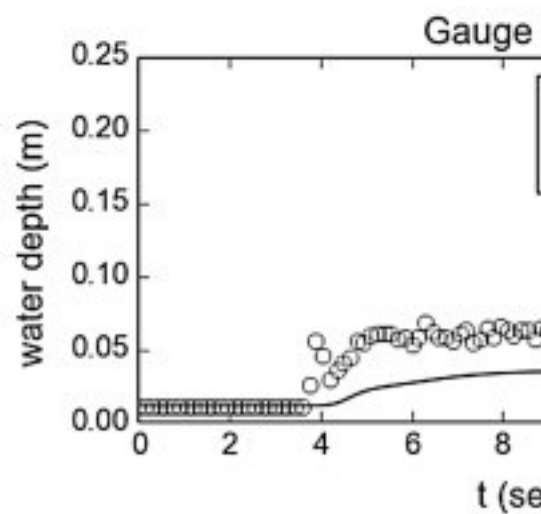
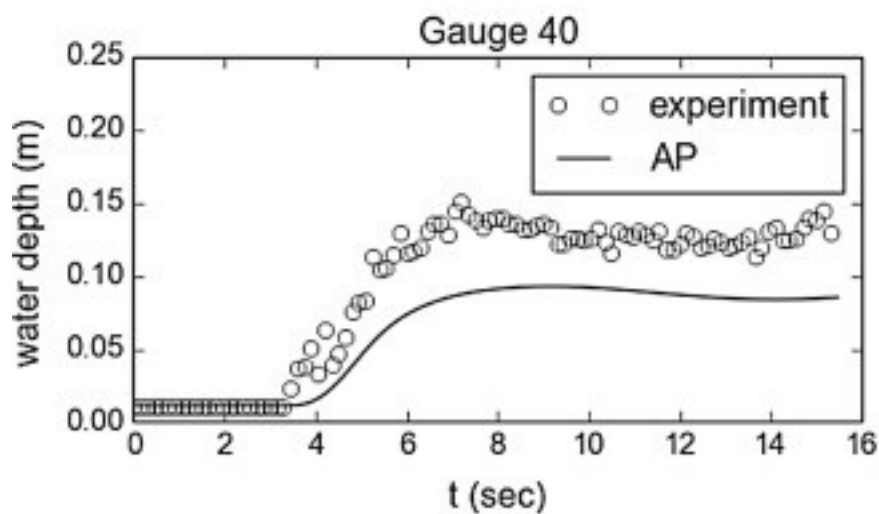
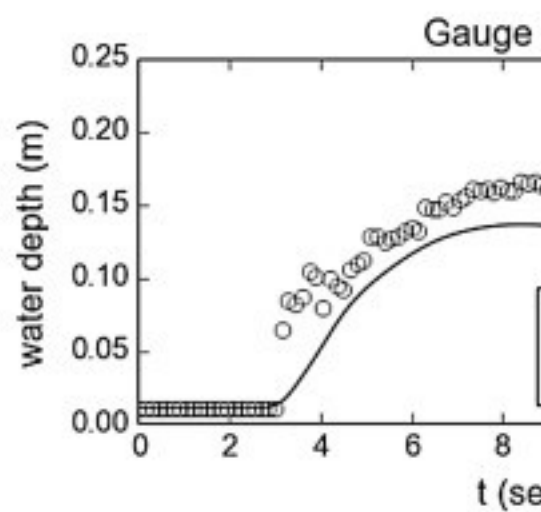
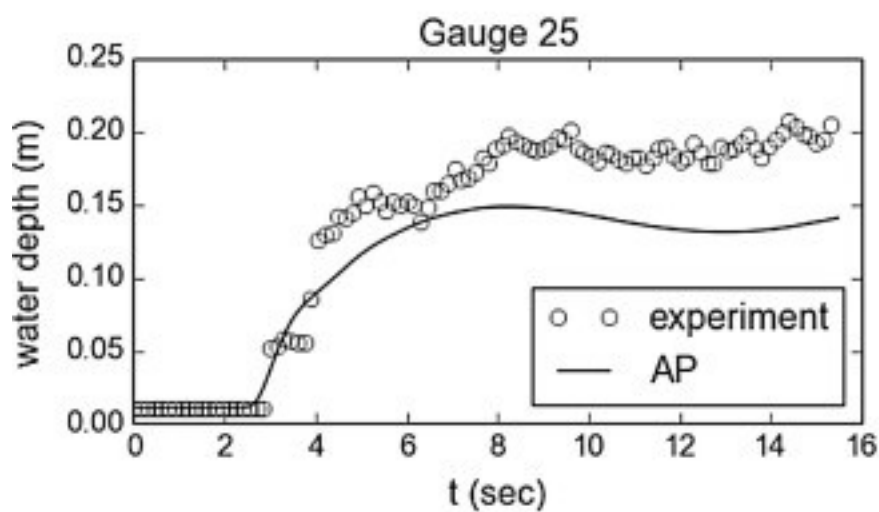
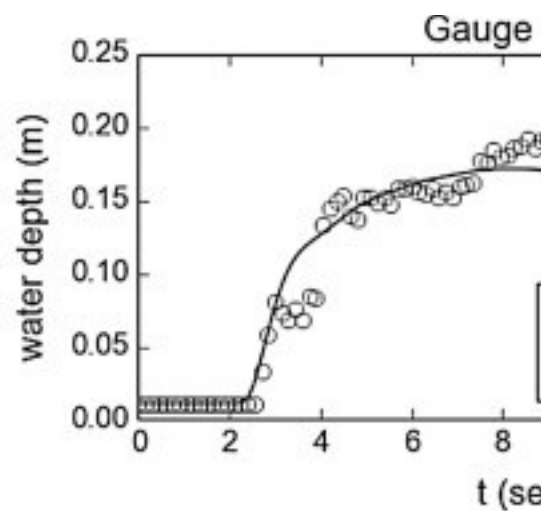
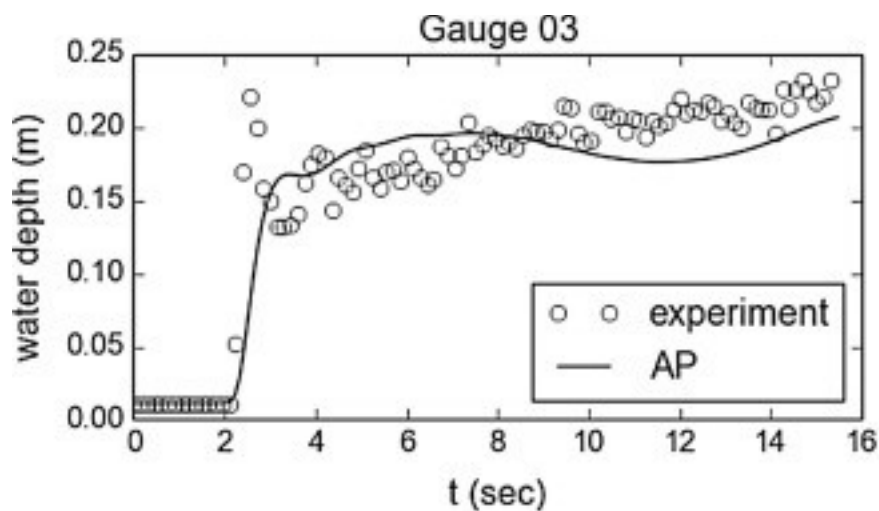
An overview of the results of this computational study is given in [Table 3](#), [Table 4](#). The L1-errors in [Table 3](#) are calculated by taking the measured data by averaging the L1-errors of all 87 gauges. Moreover, the AP model results are plotted against the measurement data in [Fig. 14](#). The errors are as expected: the HR model has the lowest error, the CR model comes second and the AP model shows the largest error. However, the errors have the same order of magnitude and are one order of magnitude smaller than the initial water depth in the reservoir ($h_0=0.4\text{m}$). [Table 4](#) shows the structural, scale and porosity errors E1, E2 and E3, respectively. The values are again averaged over 87 gauges. In this example, the error due to coarser cells is smaller than the structural and porosity errors. Indeed, the CR model results show good agreement with the HR model (cf. [Fig. 12](#)), while the difference between CR model and AP model is larger.

Table 3. Dam-break through idealized city: summary of shallow water [model formulations](#) and corresponding meshes (HR: High-resolution, CR: averaged HR model, AP: anisotropic porosity); L1-norm is calculated with regard to the experimental results.

Model	Mesh type	Cell size (m)	Cell nr.	Time (s)	L1 (m)
HR	Triangular	0.01–0.3	95975	3000	0.020
CR	Triangular	0.01–0.3	95975	3000	0.021
AP	Square	0.25	1272	4	0.026

Table 4. Dam-break through idealized city: model error (E1), scale error (E2) and [porosity](#) error (E3).

Type	L1 (m)
E1	0.020
E2	0.018
E3	0.025



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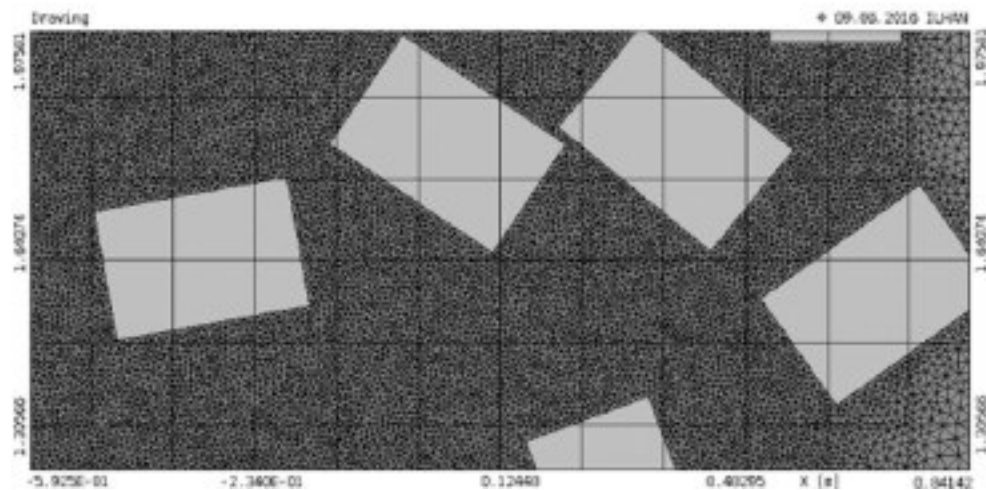
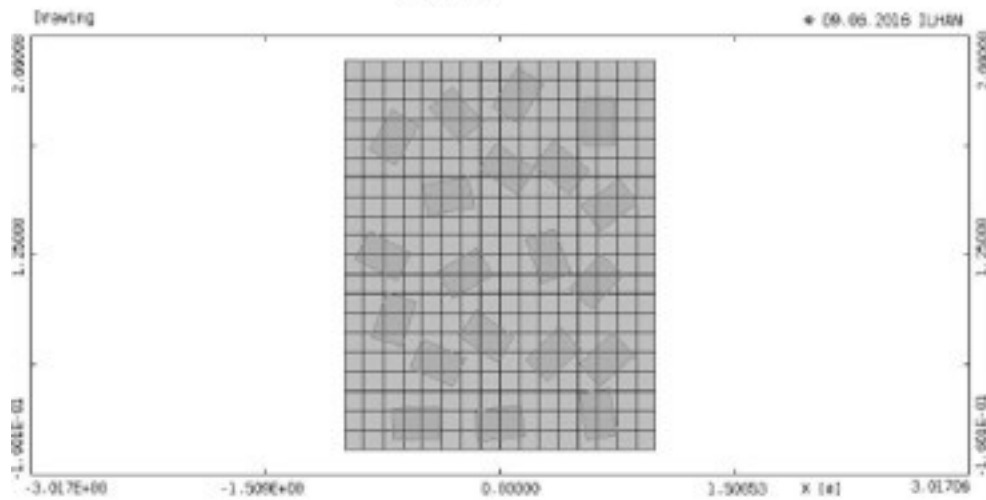
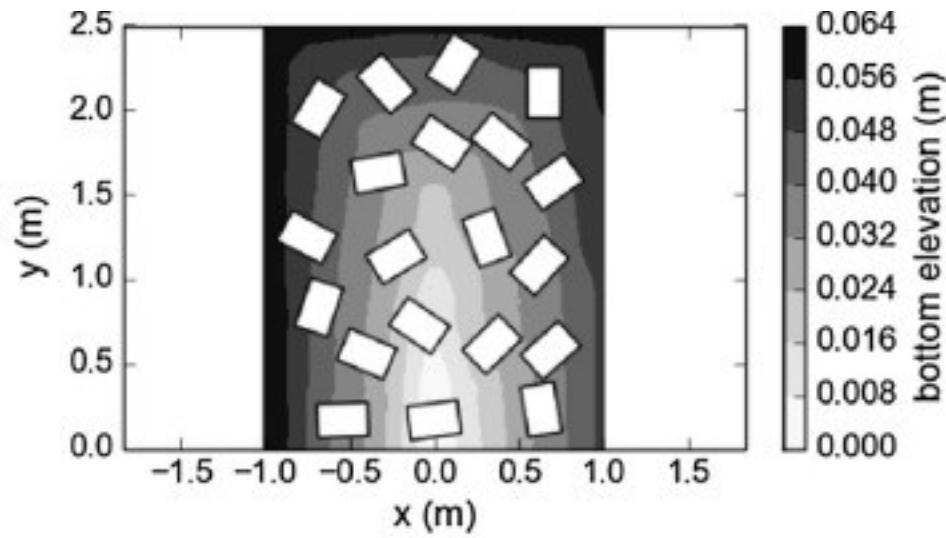
Fig. 14. Dam-break through idealized city: AP model results for water depth compared with experimental data of [Soares-Frazão and Zech \(2008\)](#).

4.4. Rainfall-runoff in an idealized urban catchment

A series of experiments regarding pluvial flooding in urban catchments were carried out at the Universidad de A Coruna, Spain ([Cea et al., 2010](#)). One of these experiments is studied in this computational example.

4.4.1. Domain description, initial and boundary conditions

Constant rainfall with an intensity of $i=300\text{mm/h}$ is applied for 20s to a 2.5m long and 2m wide rectangular inclined domain with a slope of 0.05. Inside of the domain, a simplified urban district is built using $0.30\text{m}\times 0.20\text{m}$ wooden blocks as houses. The configuration of the houses is plotted in [Fig. 15](#) (top). The domain is initially dry. Further details regarding the experimental setup and more building configurations can be found in [Cea et al. \(2010\)](#). In the numerical models, the outlet of the domain is an open boundary and all other boundaries are closed. The simulation runs for 150s.



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Fig. 15. [Rainfall-runoff](#) in an idealized urban catchment: bottom elevation in the domain and configuration of houses (top), CR and AP model mesh of the whole domain

(middle), comparison of HR model mesh (triangular) and CR and AP model mesh (square) between houses (bottom).

The HR model discretises the domain with a triangular mesh with varying cell size, starting at $l_{c,1}=0.05\text{m}$ at the boundary of the domain to $l_{c,2}=0.01\text{m}$ between the buildings, which are again represented as holes in the mesh. The resulting mesh has 62058 cells. The AP model uses square shaped cells with a side length of 0.125m , which results in a mesh with 320 cells. The two meshes are compared in [Fig. 15](#). The whole domain is plotted in [Fig. 15](#)(middle) with the houses marked out as reference and in [Fig. 15](#) (bottom) the region between houses. One building can be contained in approximately 6 AP model cells. Again, the alignment of the buildings does not match the AP model mesh cells.

In contrast to the previous examples, no measurement data inside the domain is available, [Cea et al. \(2010\)](#) measured the total discharge at the outlet of the domain.

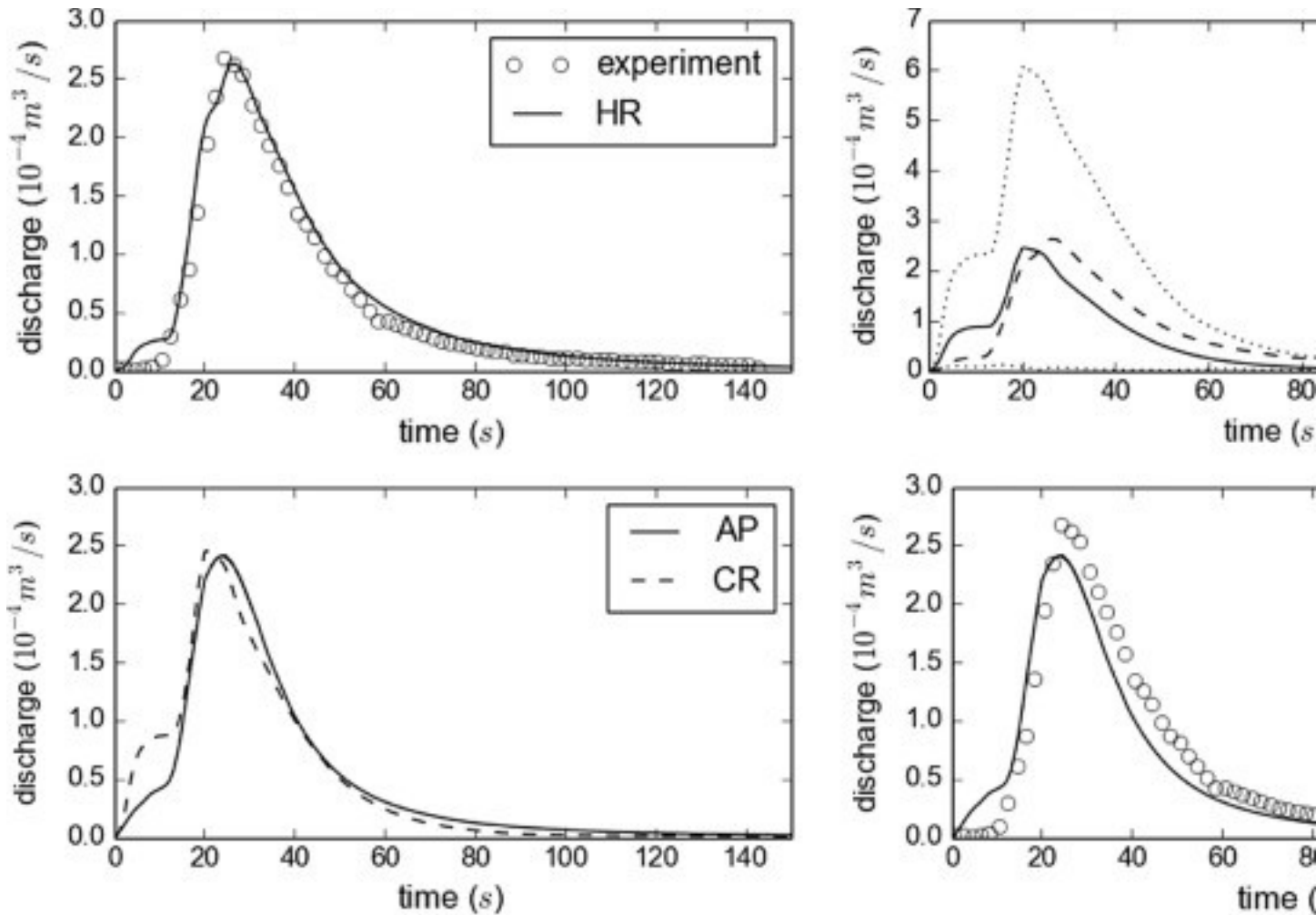
4.4.2. Model calibration and run time

The roughness of the domain is reported in [Cea et al. \(2010\)](#) in form of a Manning's coefficient of $0.016\text{sm}^{-1/3}$. The results of the HR model agree well with the experimental data, thus no further calibration is required. The HR simulation takes about 5340s. The AP model uses the same roughness coefficient ($0.016\text{sm}^{-1/3}$) and a drag force with $a \cdot cD_0=0.5\text{m}^{-1}$ (determined with Brent's method). In each cell, 400 subgrid-cells are used to calculate the porosity. The AP model simulation runs for about 43s, which is a speedup of about 124. The lower speedup in comparison to the first test case is because the stability criterion has to be set to $Cr=0.1$ in this example. The numerical simulation of rainfall is prone to instabilities because of small water depths and the presence of the mass source ([Murillo et al., 2007](#)).

4.4.3. Error analysis

4.4.3.1. Structural model errors

The HR model shows good agreement with the experimental data. The discharge at the outlet of the domain as calculated by the HR model is plotted against the measured discharge in [Fig. 16](#) (top left). In the first 10s of the simulation, the model discharge overshoots the measured discharge. This has been also observed in [Cea et al. \(2010\)](#), and is most likely because at the beginning of the experiment the [shear stress](#) on the thin water film in the domain is holding the water back. This can not be reproduced by the shallow water model. After the first 10s, both [hydrographs](#) show very good agreement.



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Fig. 16. [Rainfall-runoff](#) in an idealized urban catchment: HR model results for discharge at the outlet of the domain compared with experimental data ([Cea et al., 2010](#)) (top left), CR model results for discharge at the outlet compared with HR model results, dotted lines denote the minimum and maximum values inside the coarse cell (top right), AP model results for discharge at the outlet compared with CR model results (bottom left), AP model results for discharge at the outlet compared with experimental data ([Cea et al., 2010](#)) (bottom right).

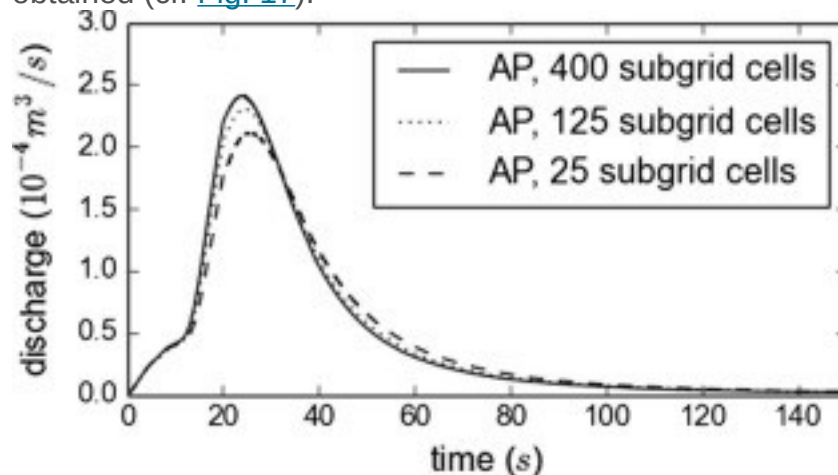
4.4.3.2. Scale errors

The CR model agrees with the HR model, yet the agreement is not as good as in the first test case, especially at the beginning of the simulation. In [Fig. 16](#) (top right), the maximum and minimum values of the subgrid-cells are also plotted. It is seen that the peak of the curve of maximum values is about 3 times larger than the peak of the CR

model while the curve of minimum values is close to zero. Generally, it can be concluded that the scale error underestimates the retention effect of the domain.

4.4.3.3. Porosity model errors

The AP model results are plotted against the CR model results in [Fig. 16](#) (bottom left) and against the experimental results in [Fig. 16](#) (bottom right). The AP model results show a similar evolution as the CR model results. The major difference between both curves is at the beginning of the simulation. The AP model undershoots the CR model results. Yet, as can be seen in [Fig. 16](#) (bottom right), it better matches the measured discharge at the end of the domain. [Fig. 17](#) shows a [sensitivity analysis](#) with regard to the subgrid-cell number, from which it is concluded that the model is sensitive to the subgrid-cell number. Apparently, a grid convergence test should be carried out for the subgrid-cell number for each simulation. The subgrid-cell number required to reach subgrid convergence increases if the subgrid-scale obstacles are not aligned with the edges. Yet, even with a small number of subgrid-cells, reasonable results can be obtained (cf. [Fig. 17](#)).



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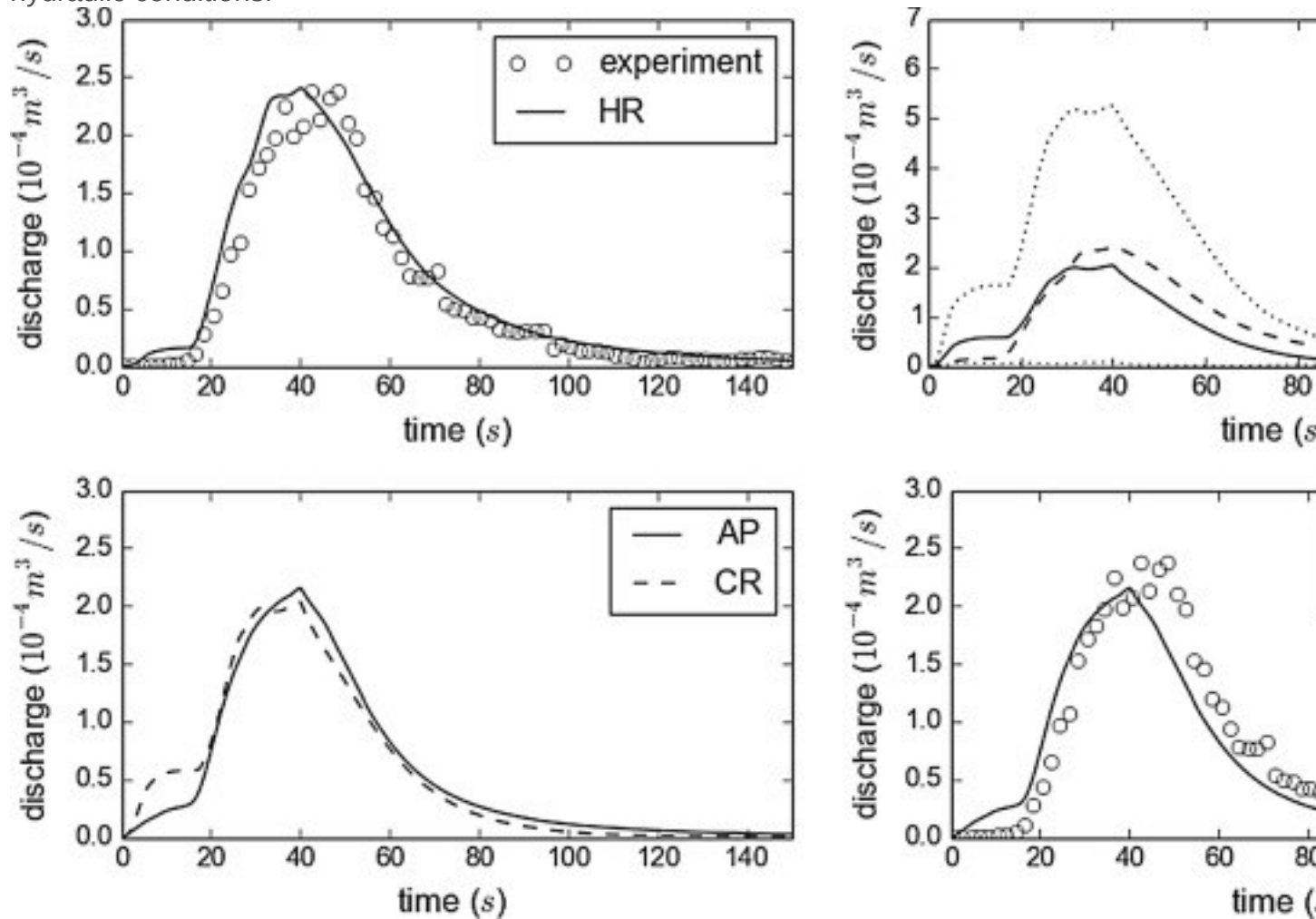
Fig. 17. [Rainfall-runoff](#) in an idealized urban catchment: Sensitivity of the subgrid-cell number on the AP model results.

4.4.3.4. Model validation

In order to show that the calibrated model is valid for different hydraulic conditions, the [rainfall intensity](#) is decreased to $i=180\text{mm/h}$ and its duration is increased to 40s. The same mesh and model parameters are used.

Results are plotted in [Fig. 18](#). The HR model results are compared with the experimental data in [Fig. 18](#) (top left). The hydrograph of the HR model is very similar to

the previous simulation with $i=300\text{mm/h}$, as it overshoots the experimental data in the beginning but shows good agreement during the later stage of the simulation. Similarly, the CR model results overshoot the HR model at the beginning and undershoot it at later times (Fig. 18(top right)). The AP model results, plotted in Fig. 18 (bottom left) shows good agreement with the CR model, only the first 20s show significant discrepancy. In Fig. 18 (bottom right), the AP model is compared to the experimental data. The agreement between the AP model and the experimental data is good. Comparing Fig. 18 to Fig. 16 shows that the AP model behavior is consistent for varying hydraulic conditions.



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Fig. 18. [Rainfall-runoff](#) in an idealized urban catchment: Model validation with [rainfall intensity](#) $i=180\text{mm/h}$, HR model results for discharge at the outlet of the domain compared with experimental data (Cea et al., 2010) (top left), CR model results for discharge at the outlet compared with HR model results, dotted lines denote the minimum and

maximum values inside the coarse cell (top right), AP model results for discharge at the outlet compared with CR model results (bottom left), AP model results for discharge at the outlet compared with experimental data ([Cea et al., 2010](#)) (bottom right).

The errors, summarized in [Table 7](#), [Table 8](#), support that the model results are consistent with the first simulation. The structural error is the smallest, the second smallest error is the scale error and the largest error is the porosity error (cf. [Table 8](#)). However, if model results are compared to experimental results ([Table 7](#)), the AP model error is less than the CR model error.

4.4.3.5. Summary

A summary is listed in [Table 5](#). The total rainfall discharge is calculated by multiplying rainfall intensity with the area of the domain, which gives $Q_{rain}=4.2 \cdot 10^{-4} \text{m}^3/\text{s}$. The HR model error is two orders of magnitude smaller than Q_{rain} , but the CR and AP model errors are only one order of magnitude smaller. The errors of type 1, 2 and 3 are given in [Table 6](#). The structural error (E1) is about two orders of magnitude smaller than the experimental results and both scale (E2) and porosity (E3) errors are about one order of magnitude smaller than the experimental results. Although E3 is greater than E2, in this test case the scale error seems to be the most significant error and the porous model somehow negates the scale errors. Simulation runs with larger cells, e.g. $\Delta x=0.25\text{m}$, which are not shown here, fail to calculate good results. The main reason is that blockage effects, which have a big influence on the [flow field](#), are underestimated for too large cells. If the coarse cell is too large such that the building lies completely inside the cell, it is not taken into account for the edge porosity and thus, its blockage effects can not be reproduced. This model limitation might give a good upper bound for the size of the coarse cell: it should be possible to capture the significant blockage effects via the edge porosities. If the coarse cell length is chosen too large, the subgrid obstacles can not occupy a significant portion of the edge and their influence on the flow will be underestimated. The authors suggest to use an edge length of about the obstacle size if the obstacles are not arranged densely. For dense building arrays, such as the first example, larger cells might be chosen. It is noted that in [Chen et al. \(2012\)](#), a method to represent this type of building blockage effects is shown which does not depend on edge porosities. This method requires additional pre-processing and is not used in this work.

Table 5. [Rainfall-runoff](#) in an idealized urban catchment: summary of shallow water [model formulations](#) and corresponding meshes (HR: High-resolution, CR: averaged HR model, AP: anisotropic porosity); L1-norm is calculated with regard to the experimental results.

Model	Mesh type	Cell size (m)	Cell nr.	Time (s)	L1 (m ³ /s)
HR	Triangular	0.01–0.05	62,058	5340	$6.0 \cdot 10^{-6}$
CR	Triangular	0.01–0.05	62,058	5340	$2.4 \cdot 10^{-5}$
AP	Square	0.125	320	43	$2.0 \cdot 10^{-5}$

Table 6. [Rainfall-runoff](#) in an idealized urban catchment: model error (E1), scale error (E2) and [porosity](#) error (E3).

Type	L1 (m ³ /s)
E1	$6.0 \cdot 10^{-6}$
E2	$2.2 \cdot 10^{-5}$
E3	$2.4 \cdot 10^{-5}$

Table 7. [Rainfall-runoff](#) in an idealized urban catchment: validation: summary of shallow water [model formulations](#) and corresponding meshes (HR: High-resolution, CR: averaged HR model, AP: anisotropic porosity); L1-norm is calculated with regard to the experimental results.

Model	Mesh type	Cell size (m)	Cell nr.	Time (s)	L1 (m ³ /s)
HR	Triangular	0.01–0.05	62058	5340	$1.3 \cdot 10^{-5}$
CR	Triangular	0.01–0.05	62058	5340	$2.6 \cdot 10^{-5}$
AP	Square	0.125	320	43	$1.7 \cdot 10^{-5}$

Table 8. [Rainfall-runoff](#) in an idealized urban catchment: validation: model error (E1), scale error (E2) and [porosity](#) error (E3).

Type	L1 (m ³ /s)
E1	$1.3 \cdot 10^{-5}$
E2	$2.0 \cdot 10^{-5}$
E3	$5.5 \cdot 10^{-5}$

5. Conclusions

A two-dimensional shallow water model with depth-dependent anisotropic [porosity](#) is tested in four test cases. The main novelty of the proposed model is the calculation of the porosities that depends on the water depth.

The formulation of the porosities suggests that the model is sensitive to the computational mesh. The model is tested in a theoretical test case to assess the sensitivity of the model to different meshes and the drag coefficient $a \cdot cD_0$. The computational mesh determines the values of the volumetric and the areal porosities. The areal porosities are the terms that introduce [anisotropy](#) to the model. It is found that the mesh has to be constructed such that the main obstructions are located at the cell edges. Otherwise, their influence on the flow diminishes significantly. The sensitivity of

the drag coefficient is related to the areal porosities. If the flow is mainly influenced by obstructions that block and divert the flow, the head loss due to drag is not as significant. This means that in cases where the areal porosities affect the flow significantly, the model is less sensitive to the drag coefficient. However, if the obstructions are located mainly inside the cells, the drag coefficient becomes a more influential parameter. In all cases, the model needs to be calibrated to determine the value $a \cdot cD_0$.

In three case-studies, where measured data are available, three types of errors are presented in L1-norm, as shown in [Kim et al. \(2015\)](#). In all cases, the porosity model error has the same order of magnitude as the scale error. The results are in agreement with the case study conducted in [Kim et al. \(2015\)](#). Good agreement has been achieved between the porosity model and the reference solution.

The model was calibrated using the drag coefficient $a \cdot cD_0$. Based on the research in [Sanders et al., 2008](#), [Özgen et al., 2016](#) and the current results, a value up to $10m^{-1}$ seems reasonable. After this value, the drag coefficient does not change the simulation results anymore. In the investigated cases, especially the range between 0 and $1m^{-1}$ is found to alter the results significantly. It is noted that this claim is based solely on the authors' experience.

Using the porosity model concept allows to run simulations on significantly coarser grids. The speedup in all investigated cases is significant, the anisotropic porosity model is about three orders of magnitude faster than the high-resolution model. The main reason behind the speedup is of course the reduced cell number.

Limitations of the presented porosity model are its mesh dependency, which means that different results may be obtained for the same case if different meshes are used and the ambiguity of the drag coefficient approximation. Further systematic research that addresses these issues would certainly improve these type of models' accuracy and reliability.

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