



Shifting Fluvial Landscapes in the Roman World: New directions in the study of ancient rivers

OXREP Conference

The Old Library, All Souls College, Oxford, 26–27 June 2014

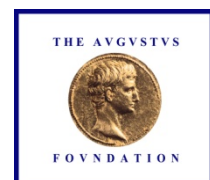
Often discussed merely as the passive settings of various historical events, rivers are and were complex, ever-shifting features of the landscape which affected settlement in innumerable ways. This conference highlights new and diverse paths of research that broaden our understanding of how rivers influenced life within the Roman Empire.

If we now understand that climatic fluctuation was widespread in antiquity, we must also understand how these changes affected day-to-day life. How did climatic and environmental change affect inter-annual variation in hydrology? How did flood and drought cycles change along with these factors? How did these changes affect those living along the rivers, and how did human activity curb or encourage fluvial change? Moreover, how did changes in fluvial landscapes affect the utilization of rivers for transportation and communication? Was living alongside so many waterways always a blessing, or was it also a curse?

Papers address different river systems across the Empire in order to bring out regional and chronological variations. By uniting experts in archaeology, ancient history, geomorphology, and climate this conference will discuss new approaches to studying rivers in antiquity. Such an interdisciplinary approach will help reveal the real-world realities of life amongst the shifting fluvial landscapes of the Roman world.

There is no conference fee, but to help us estimate numbers for tea and coffee those who wish to attend are asked to register by emailing Tyler Franconi (tyler.franconi@arch.ox.ac.uk).

Tyler Franconi
Andrew Wilson





Provisional Programme

Thursday, 26 June

- 2:00–2:15 T. Franconi and A. Wilson (Oxford): Welcome and introduction.
2:15–3:00 B. Campbell (Queen's Belfast): Watery perspectives.
3:00–3:45 J.-P. Bravard (Lyon): River adjustments to change at the watershed scale and human adaptation during the Roman period: recent approaches and perspectives for future studies.
- 3:45–4:15 Coffee break
- 4:15–5:00 C. Morhange (Aix), P. Carmona (Valencia), & N. Marriner (Besançon): Geoarchaeology of fluvial Mediterranean harbours, from natural environment to anthropogenic impacts.
5:00–5:45 A. Wilson (Oxford): Rivers, wadis and climate in North Africa: torrents and drought.
5:45–6:30 M. McCormick (Harvard): Discussion.
- 6:30 Wine reception

Friday, 27 June

- 10:00–10:45 T. Franconi (Oxford): Pater Rhenus: the hydrological history of Rome's German frontier.
10:45–11:30 P. Leveau (Aix): Le Bas-Rhône: sites, fleuve et risque environnemental.
- 11:30–12:00 Coffee break
- 12:00–12:45 J.-P. Goiran (Lyon) & F. Salomon (Southampton): Roman harbours of Ostia and Portus: geoarchaeology and landscape evolution on the Tiber Delta.
- 12:45–2:15 Lunch
- 2:15–3:00 P. Niewöhner (Oxford): Miletus and the Maeander Estuary: the maintenance of socio-economic structures in the face of a deteriorating environment.
3:00–3:45 M. Whiting (Oxford): Gift of the Orontes: fluvial landscapes of northwest Syria in Late Antiquity.
- 3:45–4:15 Coffee break
- 4:15–5:00 B. Haug (Michigan): From reclamation to abandonment: *A longue durée* perspective on irrigation in Egypt's Fayyum depression.
5:00–6:00 N. Purcell (Oxford): Concluding discussion.

