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Cover image: embankments at the Danube waterfront of Regensburg "Donaumarkt" made of re-used Roman material, probably Carolingian (S. Codreanu-Windauer, BLfD 2014).

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EDITORIAL

Rivers have always been a great opportunity for communication, commerce, sources of energy and resources. Around them real economic landscapes have developed, such as those in England analyzed with GIS techniques by Eljas Oksanen. A paper that shows – as many others in this volume – how well established today are spatial, temporal and statistical analyses among archaeologists, offering novel perspectives on traditional topics. At the same time rivers connect and divide, representing frontiers and obstacles, as well as a continuous threat for those living at the waterfront (as was the case with the River Trent in England analyzed by Richard Jones, Rebecca Gregory, Susan Kilby, Ben Pears), navigating or crossing them. In the drainage basin, more than elsewhere, it is possible to measure the ability to adapt and the resilience of the local communities, using remote sensing techniques and geoarchaeological surveys. These tools have been used to reconstruct ancient river paths, flow rate variations, and man-induced hydraulic modifications in the Lower Tiber valley (Antonia Arnoldus-Huyzendveld) and along the Tirso River near Oristano (Pier Giorgio Spanu). These techniques can also be used to investigate the evolution of agrarian landscapes near rivers, which in the low plain can be heavily transformed by the abandonment of agrarian landscapes, formation of marshy areas, and land reclamations (such as in the Lower Adige basin: Gian Pietro Brogiolo, Julia Sarabia). Furthermore, archaeological methods also can identify channels, such as the Fossa Carolina, an excavated unfinished channel about 5 meters wide, with a minimum water depth of about 50 cm (Lukas Werther, Lars Kröger). Beyond channels, consolidation and precautionary measures, specific building techniques in wetlands, drainage systems in areas affected by stagnation or flooding hazards, and transports also can be analyzed.

Rivers can tell many stories, sometimes being enemies and other times resource donors, but they are always incentives to create new social and political groups able to cope with them.

Cécile Rivals, winner of the 2017 PCA Award, proposes the use of the graph theory applied to urban landscape, to transform the fiscal appraisal notes, dated to the 15th century, into developmental planimetries of the blocks. New perspectives in the study of ceramics, especially for those still without conclusive chronology, are offered by the rehydroxylation dating method (RHX) for the dating of early medieval ceramics from southern Apulia in Italy (Paul Arthur, Alessandro Buccolieri, Marco Leo Imperiale). These methodological issues, as well as the paleopathological and anthropological analyses (here proposed by Jesús Herrerin, Lucía Muñoz, Natasa Sarkic, Rosa Dinarés on the necropolis of Viana de Duero in Spain), can be considered part of "traditional" archaeology. A different research line, with political implications, follows the archaeological study of English colonization in Ireland (imposed to punish a rebellion) between 1595 and 1643: an excellent paper describes a recent project developed by David Edwards and Colin Rynne.

Massimiliano Granieri's dossier about the legal framework of cultural heritage raises issues about political choices. Among the different countries, Italy stands out negatively, because of its elitist ideas on heritage, which result in restrictions and economic problems for researchers. A more open and democratic access to research is inspiring some of the recent projects developed in Padova, such as the participatory processes of research and heritage valorisation presented by Alexandra Chavarría, Francesca Benetti, Francesca Giannetti, Vito Santacesaria. The Council of Europe legislated these themes in different years with antithetic conventions: initially with the repressive Valletta Convention, which reaffirmed a bureaucratic idea of heritage management; later with the Faro Convention, inspired by the concept of a shared understanding and protection of heritage. This latter concept should be followed to give impulse to a discipline in crisis. A traditional understanding of archaeology (as Enrico Gianichedda highlighted) was used instead by the panel of the recent exam for archaeologists of the Italian Soprintendenza. In fact ignoring the real state of the art of a multidisciplinary and diachronic science, no trace of the methodological or transchronological aspects of archaeology appeared in the final oral exam used to discard 23 candidates out of the last 226.

A trend towards a focus on chronological specialisations and ignoring the real state of the art of a multidisciplinary and diachronic science that also reflects current programs in many Italian universities, condemning our academic and management systems to isolation from the exciting future perspectives which European archaeology is offering abroad.

The objective of PCA, now arrived to its 7th volume, is to open a window to this forward-looking international perspective.